DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 454 885 JC 010 178

TITLE	Celebrating a Century of Innovation in Higher Education, 1901-2001. [Toolkit].
INSTITUTION	American Association of Community Colleges, Washington, DC.; Association of Community College Trustees, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	2001-00-00
NOTE	81p.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Community Colleges; *Educational History; *Institutional Cooperation; Mass Media Use; Recruitment; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS	*Communication Strategies

ABSTRACT

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) have commissioned this toolkit to help colleges effectively publicize a major milestone: in 2001, America's community colleges will celebrate 100 years of service and achievement. This year-long celebration presents community colleges with an unparalleled opportunity to tell their stories of innovation, adaptation, and success to education consumers, national and local media, policymakers, and the general public. Celebrating the success may help enrollment objectives. The centennial can also be used to raise an institution's profile with policymakers. This handbook provides strategies, tools, and helpful tips designed to make colleges' communication as effective and compelling as possible. The first chapter helps identify key audiences and develop messages for discrete target groups. Elements of successful communication action plans are described, including creating and implementing strategies, and coordinating with AACC and ACCT's national efforts. The second chapter suggests a process for persuading the public to support community colleges through community relations and advocacy work. The third chapter describes techniques for contacting the media, pitching stories, and using the media to reach other audiences. The fourth chapter offers suggestions for building a public speaking campaign. The final chapter includes print public service announcements and a radio public service announcement in both English and Spanish. (JA)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 454 885

1901 – 2001

CELEBRATING A CENTURY OF INNOVATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

JC010178

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

D. Casey

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2B

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction:	Community Colleges Celebrate 100 Years!
Chapter 1:	Elements of an Effective Centennial Communications Strategy
Chapter 2:	Working with the Community
Chapter 3:	Working with the Media
Chapter 4:	Communicating the Centennial and Local Community College's Message
Chapter 5:	Centennial Materials

TC010178

COMMUNITY COLLEGES CELEBRATE 100 YEARS!

In 2001, America's community colleges will celebrate 100 years of service and achievement. This year-long celebration presents community colleges with an unparalleled opportunity to tell their stories of innovation, adaptation, and success to education consumers, national and local media, policymakers, and the general public.

To make the Centennial year a success we will need the participation of community colleges nationwide – there is no celebration without you! There are important reasons why you should enlist the resources and talent of your institution to join us in this celebration.

- The Centennial is an opportunity to capitalize on the growing recognition of community colleges. Telling our success stories will help continue the good will we have begun to earn from the business community, workers, policymakers, and others. It is an opportunity to substantially raise both our visibility and our credibility.
- Celebrating our successes may help you meet fundraising objectives. The Centennial events will help raise awareness and recognition for the institutions that participate in the celebration. Citing recent accomplishments ultimately will help potential grantmakers and private philanthropists understand the value you bring to the community of learners.
- Celebrating our successes may help enrollment objectives. Among the audiences for publicity surrounding the Centennial will be high school administrators, guidance counselors, parents, and students. Raising the visibility of your institution and its accomplishments can help sustain or augment enrollment objectives.
- The Centennial can be used to raise your institution's profile with policymakers. Policymakers – even those who already support your mission – need constant reminders of your role and track record. The Centennial is a vehicle for reinforcing the positive messages that can fuel increased awareness and funding.

The History

Community colleges have a rich history. In many ways, retelling our history gives all those who hear it a chance to see how closely our growth and mission parallel our country's own growth, enlightenment, and commitment to equity. To many, we have become "democracy's college."

The oldest continuously operating public community college was born of an experiment in Joliet, Illinois. In 1901, the Joliet Township school board authorized its high school to offer postgraduate courses. The courses were so well attended that in 1916 the postgraduate

division was separated from the high school and was formally renamed Joliet Junior College.

Joliet was successful because it demonstrated that with public support it could offer courses equal to those offered in universities. In fact, the University of Chicago and Northwestern University both accepted courses offered at Joliet for students wishing to transfer to these well-respected institutions. Joliet also was a success because the courses it offered attended to the needs of the community.

Thirty years later, at the conclusion of World War II, community colleges played a major role in educating returning soldiers for re-immersion into the workforce. The nation's policymakers feared that overwhelming a postwar economy with millions of servicemen and servicewomen would launch the country into another depression. The government's response to these warranted fears was passage of the GI Bill, which would not only delay the re-entry of military personnel into the workforce, but also would give them the skills they would need to make a contribution to the changing market. Community colleges were particularly well suited to this task, and along with other higher education institutions received a huge boost in enrollment.

In 1947, two years after the end of the war, a commission appointed by President Truman to explore options for expanding educational opportunities gave community colleges another boost. The Truman Commission, concluding that 49 percent of high school graduates could benefit from two years of postsecondary education, recommended the formation of a network of publicly supported two-year institutions to ease students' transitions to four-year colleges. The framework envisioned for the schools is the structure they follow today: they charge little for tuition, work closely with public schools and the community, offer continuing education for adults as well as technical and general education, and are locally controlled.

The 1960s were years of tremendous growth for community colleges. During the decade, 457 new community colleges opened. Several factors contributed to this rapid growth. In 1965, Congress passed the Higher Education Act, which essentially guaranteed federal support to anyone who could show financial need. Two important social movements, civil rights and women's rights, also helped disenfranchised Americans to assert their rights to equal opportunity through education. Further, the Great Society of President Johnson's administration promoted education as the means to eliminate prejudice and poverty.

The Present

Today, community colleges are gaining the recognition and respect they deserve. In the boom economy of the past decade, our institutions were called upon to play a critical role in preparing new workers for highly skilled industries and in retraining older workers to learn new skills to keep them employed. For the most part, four-year colleges were not able to re-tool quickly enough to meet this challenge. Community colleges did, and in many ways they have been recognized for their contribution and have earned the support from the business community.

The retelling of this story underscores that community colleges, throughout our history, have been deeply devoted to the notion of equity. Their policy of open admissions enables anyone with the desire and commitment for scholarship to receive a college education. The open admissions policy does not mean that students can enter any program without the competencies needed for learning. Rather, it means that community colleges will offer anyone the opportunity to achieve the prerequisites required for college-level work or, if they wish, opportunities for training leading to immediate employment.

In short, the commitment of community colleges to opportunity and equity parallels the commitment of our nation to achieving economic and intellectual opportunities for all. The 100-year story of community colleges is replete with powerful democratic messages that will resonate throughout the Centennial celebration.

The Future

In the dawn of this new millennium, we are confident that community colleges will continue to provide the quality education they have in the past. As we commemorate the past "Century of Innovation," we look forward to the next century and commit to re-inventing ourselves as world needs change.

Milestones in Community College History

1901 **Founding of Joliet Junior College**

One of the earliest beneficiaries of the construction of large, modern high schools was Joliet Junior College. Founded under the influence of William Rainey Harper, president of the University of Chicago, Joliet Junior College is the oldest continuously existing public two-year college in the nation. While the junior college's courses were initially mixed in with those of the Joliet high school, by 1915 the junior college's enrollment had grown to such an extent that it necessitated the addition of a "junior college wing." This was the nation's first major facility constructed specifically for use by a public junior college.

1904 **The Wisconsin Idea**

The University of Wisconsin emphasized that its mission was to assist the general public through extension services and to provide support to the state government. The university declared that the entire state was its campus. Today, most community colleges view individual service regions as their campuses.

1917 **Adoption of Junior College Accreditation Standards**

The North Central Association of Schools and Colleges established specific standards for the accreditation of public and private junior colleges. These standards, governing such areas as admissions policies, faculty qualifications, and minimum funding levels, not only brought a degree of uniformity to the young junior college movement but demonstrated the willingness of and capacity for junior colleges to participate in America's unique system of institutional self-regulation.

1918 **Founding of Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Honor Society**

PTK was founded to recognize and encourage academic achievement by two-year college students and provide them with opportunities for individual growth and development in academics, leadership, and service.

1920 **Founding of the American Association of Junior Colleges**

Called together by Philander Claxton, U.S. commissioner of education, and his higher education specialist, George Zook, more than 25 public and private junior college leaders met in St. Louis to organize the American Association of Junior Colleges. The association became a forum for community college issues and a source of mutual support for its members at a time when the potential of the junior college was not widely understood or appreciated. In 1972, the association name was changed to the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges. In 1992, the name was changed again to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), in an effort to unify its diverse membership of technical, junior, and community colleges.

1928 **The First State Junior College Board**

Mississippi was the first state in the nation to organize a statewide governing board with specific oversight responsibility for the public junior colleges within its boundaries. The state's governing board worked closely with elected local boards in developing a strong network of public junior colleges that effectively balanced transfer and vocational programs.

1944 **Passage of GI Bill of Rights**

U.S. Congress passed the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, popularly known as the GI Bill, to provide financial assistance for veterans of World War II who wished to pursue higher education. Building on smaller federal student aid programs developed at the end of the Great Depression, the GI Bill represented the federal government's first attempt to provide student aid on a large scale, helping to break down the economic and social barriers to attending college.

1947 **Higher Education for American Democracy**

Published by the President's Commission on Higher Education, this report, popularly known as the Truman Commission Report, called for several things, including the establishment of a network of public community colleges that would charge little or no tuition; serve as cultural centers; be comprehensive in their program offerings with an emphasis on civic responsibilities; and serve the area in which they were located. The commission helped popularize the term community college.

1963 - 1965 **Federal Aid to Higher Education**

With the adoption of the Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963 and the first Higher Education Act of 1965, the federal government dramatically expanded its direct aid to community colleges and their students. Through the Facilities Act of 1963, communities were given the means to construct new campuses and enlarge existing facilities. Through the Higher Education Act of 1965, and its subsequent reauthorizations, the federal government provided a range of direct grants and loans to students based on need as a means of lessening the barrier of cost to higher education access.

1968 **Creation of the League for Innovation in the Community College**

B. Lamar Johnson founded the League for Innovation to promote experimentation and innovation in community colleges. The League limits its membership to 20 colleges, which are expected to demonstrate outstanding commitment to cutting-edge thinking in leadership and direction of community colleges. Results and information are shared with community colleges across the nation.

1972 **Establishment of Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT)**

ACCT is the national organization for the nation's community college lay trustees. More than 6,000 trustees govern the nation's community colleges. ACCT places major emphasis on providing trustees with the knowledge, skills, and avenues for influencing public policy at the national and state levels. ACCT works closely with AACC in shaping, achieving, and promoting the community college mission.

1978 **Proposition 13 in California**

The passage of Proposition 13 in California signaled the beginning of an increased demand by the public for greater accountability from its public institutions. Community colleges have been in the forefront in adopting strategies for ensuring the most effective use of public funds in an era of fiscal constraint.

1988 **Commission on the Future of Community Colleges Report**

The commission's report, *Building Communities: A Vision for a New Century*, defined community "not only as a region to be served, but also as a climate to be created." Community colleges were challenged to assume a leadership role in creating a renewed climate of community in their service regions.

2000 **New Expeditions Report**

A report titled *The Knowledge Net* summarizes the results of New Expeditions, a joint project of the American Association of Community Colleges and the Association of Community College Trustees, sponsored by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Relying on input from the field and critical analysis of trends, the report sets a strategic direction for the nation's community colleges for the first part of the 21st century and challenges the colleges with a series of recommendations for action.

The Centennial Toolkit

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) have commissioned this toolkit to help you make the most of this shared opportunity. In it you will find strategies, tools, and helpful tips designed to make your communication messages as effective and compelling as possible. All are geared to the following objective: focusing the public's attention on the Centennial. We expect this toolkit however, to have a shelf life that goes beyond the centennial year. With that in mind, it has been designed to give you information, tips, and strategies that will last for many years.

The first chapter of the toolkit helps you identify key audiences and develop messages for discrete target groups. Elements of a successful communication action plans are described, including creating and implementing strategies, coordinating with AACC and ACCT's national efforts, identifying resources and troubleshooting.

The second chapter suggests a process for persuading the public to support community colleges through community relations and advocacy work. Because many community colleges work with local corporations, the kit also includes ways in which media partnerships with local employers can benefit both.

The third chapter describes techniques for contacting the media, pitching stories, and using the media to reach other audiences. The section includes sample materials you can use, including media advisories, press releases, a pitch letter, an opinion editorial and radio public service announcement (PSA) scripts for the Centennial.

The fourth chapter offers suggestions for building a public speaking campaign. It describes how to identify the most effective spokespersons and how to communicate with a broad number of public groups. It includes a sample letter requesting a speaking opportunity, as well as a sample speech on what community colleges have accomplished in their first 100 years and what lies ahead.

The final chapter includes print PSAs and a radio PSA in English and Spanish. The Centennial logo slicks, flag, and lapel pin are also included in this section.

Because every communications department has different needs, different budgets, and different levels of experience, some of the strategies may be more useful to you than others. For that reason, you should consider approaching this toolkit as you would a cookbook. Leaf through it and choose the recipes that work best for you.

However you choose to use this toolkit, please keep in mind that time is of the essence. Maximizing your communications strategy will require advance planning. In less than a year the Centennial will be upon us. During this national celebration, take advantage of this opportunity to promote your college as a unique institution, but also as part of a proud, shared heritage.

sample centennial activities & collateral materials

Following are some things you can do at your institution to celebrate the Centennial:

- Distribute Centennial bookmarks to all area schools and public libraries;
- Hang Centennial banners in very visible locations inside and outside the college;
- Sponsor a roundtable community discussion on the future of education or some other topic of local interest;
- Create an insert for the local newspaper celebrating moments in the college's history or major accomplishments;
- Schedule a fine arts night to feature student and faculty talent;
- Host a college tour;
- Sponsor a periodic lecture series, open to the community, on topics that faculty are actively researching;
- Print and sell at cost Centennial T-shirts for faculty, staff and students;
- Fly the Centennial flag and banners at such local celebrations as the July 4th parade;
- Feature the Centennial logo in all schedules, newspaper ads and other items published during the year;
- Prepare a proclamation to be issued by the local city council and state legislature;
- Prepare a Centennial postmark;
- Place a newspaper ad noting the Centennial events; and
- Create Centennial screensavers.

ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE CENTENNIAL COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

The success of any initiative — in matters ranging from public policy to interpersonal dynamics — is directly related to the success with which it is communicated. This is especially true when it comes to building support for the AACC/ACCT initiative.

The community college story is compelling. Over the years, community colleges have been able to reinvent themselves as the need arose to meet the changing demands of their communities and the nation. Increasingly businesses have identified a compelling need for the colleges to provide workforce development so that industries can stay globally competitive. This is especially true in cutting-edge technologies, where the clock of innovation is telling time in nanoseconds, rather than in months or years.

These forces have changed the program offerings at community colleges, as well as the composition of the student body. The average age of a community college student is 29, 16 percent are over 40 and 50 percent work full-time. In short, community colleges are affordably fulfilling a need that no other institution can.

But it is not enough to have a compelling story. The public relations/affairs offices of community colleges must have an effective strategy for telling this story. The strategy should be the engine, not a caboose, in the overall Centennial communications effort.

ELEMENTS OF A COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

A sound communications strategy will address the needs and concerns of many "publics" with whom community colleges relate - from business leaders to parents and students, education policy-makers, and media. At its core, a comprehensive strategy incorporates:

- The planned use of actions and communications to inform public opinion, and influence attitudes and behaviors of important publics and decision-makers within and outside of the system.
- Appropriate messages targeted to specific groups or individuals to achieve specific goals.
- Two-way flow of information to help evaluate the success of an initiative and modify or adapt accordingly.
- Effective use of mass media and direct community relations to disseminate messages, news and information; monitor public response and involvement; and engage the public in the AACC/ACCT initiative.

Communications is truly a central leadership and management function, requiring a two-way flow of information. It is just as important to listen as it is to share opinions and information. If you are not plugged in to the grapevine, it will be hard to design a strategy that meets community needs and even more difficult to evaluate the success of your communications.

Often it is easy to get caught up in the daily activities of your job - forgetting the big picture. You focus on the next event, the next call, the next request from your colleagues or supervisor, rather than on how these activities fit together to build support for your college. Planning forces you to shift your focus to the big picture, to develop an overall strategy, and to determine the most effective mix of internal communications, media relations activities and community events to support that strategy.

Improving the quality of both internal and external communications on your campus can have a positive impact on every aspect of your college and community life. It is not surprising that some of the best-managed institutions in both the public and private sectors dedicate a significant portion of their time to communications planning. In essence, the communications strategy reflects the "business strategy" of each community college site. If prepared thoughtfully, the plan will foster cooperation, coordination and integration among various facets of the community important to your college.

Anatomy of Communications Strategy

A comprehensive strategy should encompass every facet of your team's activities, while at the same time taking every facet of your community and the college into consideration. The best strategies include information from the following checklist.

- **Goals.** Establish both long and short-term goals for the site. Know what you want to accomplish and make sure that these goals are clearly defined and realistic.
- **Audiences.** Knowing the desired audiences to target is an important component of any communications strategy. Be mindful of internal audiences at your college as well as such external audiences as business leaders, the media, education policymakers, parents, students, and civic leaders.
- **Messages.** Carefully consider the content of your communications. Think through the messages (essential topics to be communicated) that you want to convey. The messages that are developed should be well written, clear, and concise.
- **Specific audience messages.** Since the plan will likely address various audiences, tailor messages for each specific audience. While the essence of your message will remain the same, the way in which it is conveyed will vary based on the audience.

- **A plan for implementation.** In the execution phase of the communications plan, consider the means and activities that will best achieve your goals and the vehicles that will best convey your message to specific audiences. The optimal vehicle for some audiences may be print media, such as newspapers, magazines, or newsletters. Other audiences may be best reached by electronic media such as television, radio, or videos. Face-to-face communications and well-coordinated community events are vehicles to disseminate messages and engage members of the public.

- **A plan for materials development.** Develop materials that clearly convey the message and capture the attention of targeted audiences. Make sure that all materials generated from your communications team are top quality and promote excellence. Be creative.

- **Outcomes.** A good strategic plan should offer scenarios of specific expected outcomes for each component of the plan. For example, if you plan a series of activities locally to piggyback on the Centennial, expected outcomes might be: event attendance, media coverage of the event, community awareness of the programs offered at your college, and ultimately higher enrollment rates.

Start by Asking the Right Questions

A good communications strategist will ask questions early in the design and planning process of an initiative. Far too often, organizations look to the communications team for a "bailout" in times of crisis. This can be avoided by establishing a credible and proactive strategy that addresses internal and external needs. Take the time to answer the questions and validate the results.

Who are we trying to reach? The success of your initiative could rest upon the actions or decisions of one particular individual or whole classes of individuals. Be as surgical as possible in identifying priority "publics," and learn more about their needs and concerns. What is on their minds? How do they make their concerns known? What kind of relationships do you have with them? If, for example, you are trying to develop a training curriculum for workers in your local business community, it is important that you understand the needs and dynamics of the business community, the leadership of the community and who is likely to lend a sympathetic ear to your efforts.

What do we want that person or group of people to do? Be specific. Are you trying to raise awareness, build commitment, or motivate action? If you are trying to improve enrollment, you're probably interested in raising awareness of your college and the value it offers. Use plain and simple language to describe the results you want to achieve. Know when, where, and how you want a particular action or sequence of activities to occur.

What information do our target audiences need? Having clarified the intended results, consider what knowledge or information each different priority public requires to take the action or adopt the attitudes you consider vital. Do prospective students know what courses are offered, the employment opportunities that await graduates or the transfer rates to four-year

colleges? Do they possess the information needed to make wise decisions? If not, what can you do to speed the learning curve and provide easy access to additional people, publications, or other media? Whom do they trust? Equally important, consider where and how each target audience readily obtains information. What are their most reliable sources?

What message will net the change in attitude or behavior that we seek? Again, specificity is key to success. If you want people to attend an informational meeting on how your college has met the needs of local employers, provide them with the time and location so they can arrive on time. It is also important to consider carefully the language you use. Avoid jargon and professional "educationese" at all cost. Instead of relying on verbal shorthand to communicate complicated concepts, challenge your vocabulary and express points with clarity and brevity.

What is the best way to get our message to each of the target audiences we seek to influence? What media or techniques will be most effective? Where and how often do people in your target audiences gather? How do they send and receive information? From television interviews and newspaper articles to information packets you leave with high school guidance counselors, there are a variety of communications vehicles at your command. Both news media and grassroots channels can generate the support you need to keep your college a vibrant contributor to the local education and economic environment. Communicating through news media provides access to almost all target audiences and carries a good deal of authority. Grassroots tactics allow a more customized message to be communicated through the people your target audiences trust.

How well did your strategy work? It is vital to build in a mechanism for feedback so you can evaluate the communication strategy and modify it as needed. How did each target audience react to the message or technique? For example, at an informational session on course offerings, did you provide prospective students opportunities to express interest in enrollment? How might you respond to unanticipated questions or concerns? Perhaps the message was right but the communications vehicle was inappropriate. How will you incorporate what you have learned from past experience into future plans?

Implement the Plan

Once you have completed the steps of developing the plan, the implementation phase of the process should begin. Implementing the plan is made easier by completing an effective and thorough planning process as noted. However, careful thought and coordinated action are still required to ensure that the outreach efforts are effective and help raise awareness for your college through the Centennial celebration.

timeline/assignments

As a first step of implementation, a timeline should be created to help ensure your activities and strategies are conducted at the most appropriate times. Create a chart of your communications activities and assign a person to be responsible for executing each activity. The chart should include the following areas:

- activity;
- audience affected;
- key messages;
- date of execution; and
- staff person assigned.

Also, identify the cost of every project — both in terms of dollars and staff time. An activity's effect on your staff needs and budget should be predetermined. For example, you might determine that you will produce a new viewbook for the college. This is obviously a large undertaking that would require coordination of resources (both financial and staff).

Key Components to Communicate Your Strategy

Whether working with the media to publicize an event or reaching out to students or a community organization, there are several essential components needed to ensure that your communications strategy is effective and influences the target audiences. From developing clear and articulate messages to training spokespeople to creating an information tracking system, it is critical that an infrastructure be built to support the effort. The following describes the key components needed for effective communications.

creating messages

Powerful messages are at the core of powerful communications campaigns. While crafting a message to promote the value of community colleges is not the same as selling soap or cars, it does help to use some techniques of salesmanship. Just as advertisers reach buyers through memorable slogans and catchy phrases, organizers of community campaigns must develop succinct and quotable messages that set the right tone and convey the importance of their work. This is especially true of the Centennial campaign. The message must communicate an idea, such as: "Community college students who transfer to four-year colleges enter more prestigious institutions than similar students right out of high school." It also must speak to specific concerns of the audience you are trying to reach, such as: "Many community college students have earned notable recognition in their fields of endeavor."

what makes a message memorable?

To gain public support for community colleges, your messages must be clear, direct, and personal. It must address a concern, fear, or aspiration and have a direct connection to people's lives. If you can't articulate the message convincingly, then you can't expect the result or change that you desire. We know, for example, that Americans fear that the skills their students acquire by the time they graduate from high school will not prepare them for college. We also know they are concerned about the cost of tuition. A memorable message might suggest that community colleges cost only a fraction of the cost of a four-year college, and that they are uniquely qualified to offer high school graduates the skills they will need to perform in the job market or in four-year colleges as transfer students.

Use facts to support and justify a message. Most audiences are persuaded when they see evidence to support your claims or concerns. Find information that lends credence to your argument and creates a sense of urgency. For example, you might support the argument that community college teachers are more engaged with their students with these facts: community college faculty spend 72 percent of their time teaching, while their colleagues at four-year colleges spend only 57 percent of their time teaching.

Use "real-life" examples. Share an anecdote about a real-life situation to which most people can relate, and they are more likely to respond favorably to your message. Short, personal accounts and stories that get right to the point will build interest and provide unassailable testimony. You might note the personal stories of such luminaries as Gwendolyn Brooks, a Pulitzer Prize winning author and poet, or Clifford Charlesworth, the Apollo II flight commander — both graduates of community colleges.

Develop succinct and quotable talking points that capture the essence of your message. Given the time and space constraints facing the news media, you can either express your message in short, concise sentences or find that reporters and editors will edit what you say, perhaps distorting your message. Talking points could include, "Microsoft believes so much in the value of community colleges that it has contributed $7 million to fund information technology programs at selected institutions."

Tap into the big-picture issues people are talking about. Show how supporting community colleges helps improve students' chances in the competitive marketplace, or helps local economic development by ensuring that state-of-the-art industries have access to a skilled labor force.

Be positive. Research shows that the public is more likely to take notice of education issues if you present it in a positive light. Stress how community colleges have been a part of the American fiber throughout the last century and will continue to play a dynamic role in the future.

Know the debate. Know the issues. Study the messages of your allies and opponents - not to "divide and conquer," but to better understand the points that they are making and address and/or incorporate them into your work. If opponents are saying that community colleges offer an inferior education, you might cite the comments of people like Alan Greenspan, President Clinton and others who say community colleges serve a vital role in our education system

Know your audience. Think carefully about whom you are trying to reach or motivate, and what media will reach them best, and then tailor the message accordingly. You would address an audience of business people differently than you would an audience of parents or prospective students. You would use different arguments, different facts, different language and end with an appeal for different action.

Draw upon research. Use polling and survey data or findings from focus groups to learn more about the issues and the views of your target audiences. You should probably acquaint yourself with the findings of focus groups conducted for AACC in 1995, even if the context for discussion may have changed somewhat since then. Also, review past media coverage, particularly the editorial and news coverage in your state and community on education and economic productivity issues. Consider carefully what works and what does not and apply that analysis to your own message design. Test and refine messages. In-person and telephone surveys and polls, focus groups, and panel discussions are among the techniques used to hone in on the strengths and weaknesses of campaign messages. If you do not have the in-house capabilities to conduct your own research, try partnering with nearby firms. Once you have the data on public opinion, use it in your materials and speeches to show public support for your efforts. Spend the necessary time and effort to tailor and test messages aimed at netting specific results, and your community campaign will meet community needs.

Messages Versus Soundbites

Too often, individuals will assume that strong messages equal strong sound bites. That is not usually the case. Messages that begin with a statement and then use facts for support can be effective in written documents, testimonies, and discussions. But there will be times when you need to get the message out even faster.

Media interviews are the best example of this. Often, the story about a two-hour event, or even a two-year study, will be compressed into 60 seconds on the evening news. As a spokesperson, your actual on-camera time may be 15 seconds or less. In this case, an attempt to blend too many topics will make the message too complicated. Starting off your explanation with one or two short sentences is preferable.

When planning for an event at which you're likely to be quoted in the media, think of the kinds of questions you may be asked, and prepare some sound bite responses. Often, you can use longer messages to support these. But if the amplification doesn't make it into print or on the air, you still have a statement that succinctly makes your case.

tips for turning messages into sound bites

Develop succinct and quotable "sound bites" that capture the essence of your message. Instead of starting with a statement and supporting it with facts, you need a quick statement that is catchy, interesting, or controversial. While many people may object to such an extreme condensation of their important issue, the alternative is not being covered at all.

In front of a camera or at a reception, your answer to the question, "Why can't higher education produce graduates ready for work?" needs to be memorable and succinct. This doesn't mean providing a catchy slogan with no substance. But you need to go directly to the point and phrase it in a clever way. For example, you might say, "You don't solve a milk shortage by bleaching orange juice and calling it milk. A shortage of qualified high tech employees means we have to dig deep and reframe our curriculum so that it meets the labor needs of local employers."

Getting the Messages Out Effectively

Consistency is key to ensuring the community understands your messages. That means everyone on your site team must also understand the message and its underlying philosophy. All spokespeople should stay "on message" emphasizing the most effective arguments for your activities. No one likes to be in the dark. Everyone involved with the college should be informed and kept abreast of the campaign messages. Some vehicles that can be used to accomplish this are:

- **Newsletter or magazine.** A newsletter or small magazine is a sure way to inform internal audiences and allies of campaign messages, events, or situations.
- **Reception, coffee, or breakfast forum.** Hosting an informal reception, coffee, or weekend breakfast with parents and community leaders provides an excellent forum for information sharing. Participants then can assist with the dissemination process by passing information on to other parents and community members.
- **Internet forum or mailing list.** If members of your community have access to the Internet, many e-mail programs can create mailing lists in which a message could be sent to several people at once.
- **Editorial board meetings with your community newspaper.** You should have periodic meetings with the editors and writers of the community newspaper(s) to apprise them of innovations at the college. This will help build bridges and allow opportunities to explain complex issues.

Sample Community College Messages

The most effective messages are those that speak directly to the challenges and opportunities you face in your college. Using the guidelines and ideas already mentioned, forge ahead with the creation and implementation of messages that will resonate with your key audiences.

Below, you will find sample messages that may work for you. Before using them, consider how appropriate they are to your audiences and goals. Don't be afraid to modify them if necessary.

messages on academic quality

- Community colleges are a great resource for students who intend to continue their studies at four-year colleges. A University of Illinois study found that community college students who transfer to four-year schools and complete their bachelor's degrees obtain roughly equal job stability, prestige and earnings as students who began in four-year institutions.
- Attending a community college can improve some students' chances of getting into a prestigious four-year school. A University of California at Santa Barbara study showed that community college students who transfer to four-year schools enter academic institutions with more prestige than those attended by similar students right out of high schools.
- Students develop at the same rate academically in community colleges as they do in four-year colleges. A national study funded by the federal government tested community college students and students in four-year colleges after their first year of post-high school classes. The students showed virtually indistinguishable gains in reading comprehension, math and critical thinking. Similarly, at the end of their second year they had virtual parity in gains on writing skills and science reasoning.
- Students in community colleges are likely to see more of their professors than students in many top-ranked four-year colleges. A study by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges showed that community college faculty members spent 72 percent of their time teaching while their colleagues at four-year schools spent 57 percent of their time teaching.

If you question the value of attending community colleges, think again. A short list of those who have attended community colleges includes film maker Walt Disney; business executive and presidential candidate H. Ross Perot; former Labor Secretary Ray Marshall; stateswoman Jeanne Kirkpatrick; state supreme court justices Robert Gammage and Joyce Luther Kennard; members of Congress Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Sam Gejdenson and Henry Gonzales; NAACP president Kweisi Mfume; 1984 Chemistry Nobel Laureate Bruce Merrifield; transplant surgeon Daniel Hayes; retired CIA director Bobby Inman; fashion designers Calvin Klein, John Paul Goebel and Andrea Jovine; actresses Annette Bening, Jane Curtin and Sandy Duncan; actors Morgan Freeman, Clint Eastwood, Dustin

Hoffman and Tom Hanks; Pulitzer Prize-winning author and poet Gwendolyn Brooks and author Rita Mae Brown; astronauts Clifford Charlesworth, Eileen Collins, Robert "Hoot" Gibson and Fred Haise; journalists Charles Collingwood, Jim Lehrer and Sarah McClendon; sports legend Jackie Robinson, NFL Commissioner Pete Rozelle, winning Super Bowl coach Dick Vermeil, Kansas City Royals owner Ewing Kauffman and many others. A more complete list is available on AACC's Web site at www.aacc.nche.edu. Information on community colleges is also available on www.community-colleges.com.

messages on job training

- Community colleges have played a critical role in giving welfare recipients the skills they need to become productive citizens. But the job is far from complete. The hardest-to-serve welfare population needs more accessible job training and further post-secondary education to realize their potential. Community colleges, which are convenient, affordable and quick to respond to community needs, are well-positioned to continue this effort.

- In today's rapidly changing work environment, employees need constant training. An AACC study found that almost 80 percent of employers report that from 26 to 100 percent of their current workforce requires training. These same employers say they choose community college to provide workforce education and training because they are cost-effective, the quality is good, courses are frequently customized to meet their needs and the colleges are conveniently located.

- The need for skilled laborers is so great that it is crippling corporate growth. A 1998 survey of small businesses conducted by Coopers & Lybrand found that more than two-thirds of the firms that responded said a lack of skilled workers would limit their revenue growth. That's up from 50 percent in 1996 and 27 percent in 1993. Similarly, 59 percent of respondents to a 1998 U.S. Chamber of Commerce poll said it had been "very difficult" to find qualified workers that year. About half said they were dissatisfied with the quality of job applicants and more than one-third said jobs generally remained vacant at least three months. Customized training programs at community colleges can help fulfill the need for skilled laborers.

- A number of states have worked closely with community colleges to establish worker training programs for industries. When North Carolina courted Konica Corp. of Japan, officials from Guilford Technical Community College went overseas to determine what skills the film-making company would need to generate if it moved a plant to North Carolina. Such programs have helped quintuple the per capita income in Guilford County over the last 20 years and helped it survive cutbacks in the textile, furniture and tobacco industries. In Iowa, 15 community colleges have issued more than $326.9 million in tax-exempt and taxable bonds to help support the creation of 99,000 jobs through nearly 1,300 contracts with business and industry.

- Training programs at community colleges have proven invaluable to the burgeoning semiconductor industry. The Semiconductor Industry Association has developed a training program at 80 community colleges for semiconductor fabrication technicians. Texas Instruments, Intel, National Semiconductor, Motorola, Samsung and AMD are among the companies participating in the training programs.

- Community colleges have played a critical role in keeping the economy on track. Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan has noted repeatedly the community colleges have played a vital role in combating job obsolescence, which he says has increased the percent of college enrollees over age 35 from 9 percent of total students in 1972 to 18 percent in 1997. "Community colleges have burgeoned in size, and on-the-job-training has gone up very substantially," he said.

messages on remedial instruction

- Most community colleges offer remedial programs that benefit students who lack the skills necessary to compete in the marketplace or in four-year colleges. More than 55 percent of high school graduates enter college, but only 39 percent of them are prepared. Further, only 52 percent of those who enter college will graduate within five years, according to the Center for Demographic Policy.

messages on finance

- Most Americans (71 percent) believe college is too expensive. Findings from a federally-supported study (the National Study of Student Learning) suggest that attending a community college may be a cost-effective way to acquire the first two years of a college education without sacrificing quality or job market competitiveness.

- Graduates of community colleges have a significantly higher earning potential than high school graduates. Men with associate degrees earn an average of 18 percent more than men with high school degrees. Women earn about 26 percent more.

Defusing a Negative Message

An effective communications strategy must always include a plan of action for unexpected crises. It must also address how to defuse messages that could negatively affect your college's initiative and land a crippling blow to its image. Although it is unlikely that the campaign you are developing for the Centennial will provoke a negative message campaign, it is good to keep the following in mind for future efforts.

- **Brainstorm a response.** Avoid panicking or issuing an "off-the-cuff" remark. The first thing that should be done is to gather a team consisting of key communicators. Determine the who, what, when, where, and why of the situation. Determine what

pertinent information is missing from the equation and formulate potential responses. Since time is of the essence, this should be done immediately.

For example, if an editorial board attacked the quality of community college curriculum or open admission policies, the first step would be to form a team of researchers and communicators. They should look at historical trends to see if there is a way to put a positive "spin" on this information.

- **Develop a consensus on response.** Once the team has gathered all the facts and examined all possible scenarios, you should then come to a consensus on the most appropriate response. You might consider, for example, arguments about equity to address attacks on open admissions policies, or talk about job placements and relevancy when addressing arguments about the quality of the curriculum. Reaching a consensus on the response is a control mechanism that will eliminate the possibility of disseminating multiple, confusing, conflicting, or erroneous messages.

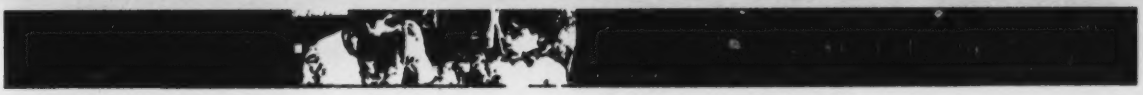
- **Select a spokesperson to deliver message.** Again, to eliminate the possibility of miscommunication, an appropriate spokesperson should be selected. The spokesperson should be the individual who is most familiar with the particular situation and, therefore, able to respond to the situation with the greatest ease. At the very least, your spokesperson must be one who is greatly trusted by the public and the media or has a position making him or her seem authoritative. After a spokesperson has been selected, a decision needs to be made on the best venue to deliver this message, e.g. a press conference, one-on-one interviews or a press statement.

- **Develop tough questions and answers.** In addition to the media and other external audiences, there may be other audiences who will ask questions that may be difficult or uncomfortable. Be prepared. Before you speak or present to any audience that you want to reach or the media, mentally switch sides with that audience and develop some tough questions that you think they might ask. Then create sound, truthful answers to these questions that incorporate the messages.

- **Communicate messages to all important audiences.** It is imperative that all key audiences affiliated with the campaign be informed of the message or response. Making this effort is very beneficial because every person at your college, and every ally, is also a public relations agent who has the potential of reaching 10 or more people with the right message. You may wish to print out speeches delivered at press conferences to be distributed to those present in the audience.

- **Communicate with the media.** In the face of a crisis, never attempt to avoid or stonewall the media. If there is a newsworthy story, the media will get to it one way or another. Remember that public perception is largely shaped through the media, therefore, cooperation is key to help to shape the story in your favor. It is better to get a small response even in a negative story than to have your side not expressed at all. Now is always the time to embrace the media.

- **Assess communications strategy.** After the immediate crisis is over, everyone responsible for the development of the response should once again assemble to evaluate their performance and the manner in which the message was received. Some questions that may be asked in reviewing the crisis and the communications involved include: What resulted from the disseminated message? Were there any trouble spots? If so, how will the trouble spots be handled?



WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Grassroots Strategies: Realizing the Vision at The State and Local Levels

Your ultimate success in improving the reach and reputation of your community college will often depend on winning the support of various groups in your state or community. From partnering with other community colleges in your state or with business allies in your community, to holding community meetings to convince influential community leaders to write op-eds, a carefully planned strategy will put the power of face-to-face communications to work.

An advocacy campaign is an extended persuasive operation designed to move people from awareness to action. You will have four main ways to do this:

1. **Through the media** – using newspapers, radio, television, and the Internet to carry your message. The advantage of this technique is that a third party would be considered less biased and more persuasive, but you would be depending on a third party to select and filter your messages.
2. **Through your own products** – using your own material (brochures, newsletters, web site etc.) to reach your audience directly. The advantage here is that everything would be under your control, but you would bear the considerable expense of getting your materials to your audience.
3. **Through word of mouth** – using allies and supporters to talk to members of your target audience directly. The advantage here is that, even in our high-tech age, nothing is more persuasive than an informed representative who can present facts and arguments. Of course a disadvantage is that one-on-one techniques consume a great deal of time and manpower.
4. **Through staging events and activities** – using rallies, speeches, meetings, marches, and special presentations. This has the advantage of showing an active organization but it too requires time and manpower.

While newspapers and television appearances can make people aware of issues, the personalized human touch is more persuasive at addressing individual questions and concerns. Since people often are influenced by what their friends and neighbors say, you should enlist the participation of trusted and respected members of the community. When people talk about education in their homes and offices, or express their concern about their children's teachers to each other on the street, you want them to express your views.

Grassroots strategies can help you build this support by showing people why they need to become involved and by giving them a specific action to take.

Moving Forward:
Turning the Plan Into Action
Leadership Team

One of the first steps to turning your plan into action is to tap into the power of local allies, including leaders of business, educational, political, and civic organizations. You can form a leadership team by taking a look at all the groups in your region that have a stake in education and the economic well-being of your community. Then see who leads these groups. These are the potential allies you should recruit. Likely candidates include business executives, civic leaders, successful and loyal alumni, local and regional political figures, union presidents, professional trade associations, school superintendents, chamber of commerce presidents, etc. Given the right messages, you can help these audiences understand the value of a healthy community college in their neighborhood.

But don't just round up the usual suspects. Dig deep and reach out a little bit. See who could make a contribution to your efforts. These could be any number of people with a deep commitment to education and a willingness to invest sufficient time in its stability and improvement, or those with special connections to the decision-makers who can get you what you want.

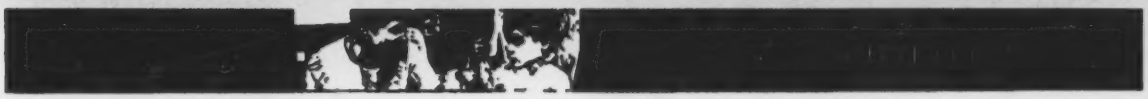
Because many of the activities involved in community relations involve a great deal of time and effort, you need to look closely at your goals and make sure that your activities are aimed at those who can help you reach your goals. In some cases you may need to do a little horse-trading by engaging in activities that support another group's agenda to win their support for activities aimed at your goals. In such cases it is helpful to have a plan that shows how each activity is connected to some larger goal. Remember to let your goals drive your strategy so that every activity you engage in pushes you closer to achieving them.

build a list of members and contacts

As you work in your local community or region, it is helpful to maintain a list of contacts and members of your leadership team. The list should not just record who is a member but also information about what other organizations they belong to, what influence they might have on decision makers, and what resources they have that could assist your work. You can do this on a database that is shared among your office or internal working team. This database should have room for comments and lists of people who they could influence in addition to the standard address fields.

quick communications

No matter what information must be communicated, it is essential that it be done quickly, in an orderly fashion. Often, organizations are faced with the challenge of providing immediate information to a broad number of individuals, and are left guessing as to the best way to do this. There are many ways to quickly disseminate information, including:



Oral communications - The traditional telephone tree, in which each person has a list of three to five others who they could call, remains one of the most useful tools for circulating information and ideas. This still is the best way to do emergency communications when speed is of the essence.

Written communications - Depending on the time frame, it can also be useful to send written communications, in the forms of memos, letters, executive summaries, or direct mail, to your targets. This form can take the most time, but it is still the most effective way of getting a great deal of information in front of an individual.

Electronic communications - In the digital age, it may be useful to set up an electronic mailing list, using e-mail and other on-line tools for circulating information. There are three basic ways of implementing an electronic communications component:

- **Manually.** Most modern e-mail programs allow a user to create groups or distribution lists from their address book. Using this system, one person would be the point of contact. That person would create a distribution list on his or her computer, and then forward messages to the whole list. This allows screening of messages but makes this one person the bottleneck through which all messages must flow.
- **Listserv/mailing list.** The alternative is to use special software designed to automate the process. Programs such as Listserv and Majordomo allow people to subscribe to the list by sending commands "subscribe listname e-mail_of_person" to a special e-mail account. Mail sent to the list address then is automatically sent to everyone on the list. Most colleges have this program available or you can use an Internet service such as Esosoft (http://www.esosoft.com/mailinglist). The disadvantage is that many users find these commands hard to use. Subscribers to a list may frequently see questions about how to get off it.
- **Web-based.** Another alternative is to use a mailing list provider on the Internet that offers a Web-based form for people to subscribe through the Worldwide Web. The best known of these is http://www.onelist.com and http://www.coollist.com. The disadvantage here is that these lists support themselves by adding a few lines of advertising to your message.

Coalitions

Effectively promoting your college is a game of numbers. The more people supporting you on an issue, the greater the chance of getting what you want. Joining or creating a coalition can maximize your support and increase you strength. Many of the most important government policies have been initiated by ordinary citizens through the hard work and joint action of a coalition.

There are many different types of coalitions. Coalitions can be formal or informal; permanent with ongoing goals or temporary on a single issue; they can be funded or unfunded; staffed or unstaffed; large or small. Coalitions can be based on a simple agreement between two groups or a loose national network involving hundreds of groups and activities.

The possibilities for creating coalitions to support teacher quality and improvement issues are extensive because there are so many people and organizations who have a vested interest — either directly or peripherally — in your success.

building coalition partnerships with the local business community

Because of your work on job training programs and academic programs designed to develop special job skills, a symbiotic relationship probably has developed already between your college and local businesses or organizations. It makes sense for you to mine this relationship to help spread the word about your achievements.

For example, if you have worked closely with a high technology manufacturer in your region, that business might be willing to salute you in a press conference or an awards ceremony designed to attract media attention. The general hook for the event would be the Centennial; the specific hook would be the numbers of workers you have trained for that business.

Similarly, you might work with the local chamber of commerce to develop a week-long series of events designed to honor your contributions in the spirit of the Centennial. Alternatively, the chamber might be willing to stage an event once a month, with local industries taking turns to honor you.

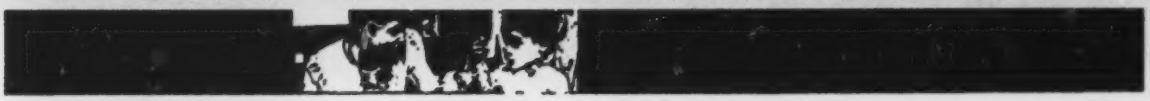
Hospitals that benefit from your nursing programs might be willing to salute your work. Recognition events could honor faculty or individual employees who are alumni of your programs.

If you have any human-interest stories about welfare recipients who have rejoined the workforce, thanks to your job training initiatives, a local business might want to call attention to your success.

In each of these examples, the message has a better chance of attracting the media if it comes from partners, rather than you.

Materials

Once you have settled on specific goals and have developed your messages, you can begin to determine what materials are needed. Look through what you already have and see what can still be used. Also, look for effective materials from other organizations and try to narrow down the elements that make you think these pieces work. Then decide what new materials should be written or developed based on the needs of specific audiences and the messages you wish to communicate.



Materials can include: your community college brochures, viewbook, fact sheets, Q&As, posters, editorial cartoons, business cards, logo, booklet, articles, op-eds, letters to the editor, Web sites, and Internet postings.

Surveying the Community

There are a number of ways to take the pulse of your community. These techniques include:

- Monitoring the activities of other groups such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the College Board, the American Council on Education and others;
- Tracking issues through the media and local debates;
- Conducting focus groups of randomly selected members of your target audience; and
- Conducting a public opinion poll or targeted survey.

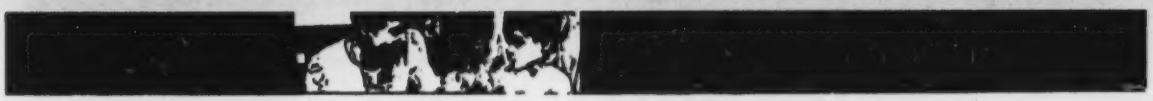
The goals here would be to examine the attitudes and opinions of neighbors and civic and business leaders to determine what they already know and how you can bring them to support your agenda and the agenda of the AACC and ACCT.

Polling

If you should decide to use public opinion polling or surveys to promote your agenda, it is important to fully understand the size and scope of your endeavor. It is a rather sophisticated process with complex principles. You may use either your own faculty or staff to construct the instrument, or you could partner with local newspapers, graduate students at a nearby university, or a professional research firm to conduct the study. In the meantime, here are some rules to follow to draft a fair instrument and arrive at valid results:

Rule 1: **Determine the Size and Scope of The Survey.** The sample size for the survey depends largely on what you intend to do with the information. Be scientific for a definitive view of positions on an issue, or for information to be released to the public. If you want to get valid information for key subgroups, such as women vs. men or young vs. older citizens, be sure your sample group is large enough. For groups of about 400 people, survey about 150 from the subgroup; for 1,000 to 1,500; survey 250, increasing the number by 5 for each additional 100 people.

Rule 2: **Choose a Representative Sample of the Population.** In most communities it will not be possible to survey every single person. If your survey is to provide results that are general to the entire community, every person in your community must have the same probability of being chosen to answer the survey. For a large



community, use a random sampling by calling every 10th, 20th, or 30th name in the telephone book.

Rule 3: **Choose the Best Way to Collect the Information.** Surveys can be conducted over the telephone or through the mail. A mailed questionnaire costs less and is far easier to conduct, though the number of people who respond is significantly lower and the results are not as reliable as phone surveys. Aim for a response rate of at least 50 percent.

Rule 4: **Develop a Useful Questionnaire.** The questions in a valid survey must be worded so that the answers are really meaningful. Questions should be pretested on a small group (such as friends or family) to see if readers understand what the writers meant to ask. Unclear questions can yield worthless responses.

Biased wording also invalidates results, so emotionally loaded or slanted questions should be strictly avoided. It may be difficult to ask neutral questions (especially when you have strong feelings on the topic) but that is the only way to get valid information.

Each question also must be worded to elicit a response to one idea since combining more than one thought in a question makes it unclear as to which thought the person is responding to.

In addition to clarity and neutrality, question-writers must also consider how the answers to a question will be tabulated. Responses to totally open-ended questions (such as, "What do you think about your local school?") can be time-consuming and difficult to categorize and assess. Instead, use questions with a choice of answers and ask the reader to check one, or ask for numbered levels of agreement/ disagreement where 1 is strongly agree and 5 is strongly disagree.

Rule 5: **Execute and Spread the Word!** Once your survey is complete, use the media and other techniques described in this tool kit to publicize the findings. Without publicity and interpersonal communications, your valuable information might be overlooked and have a negligible impact. Make sure to preface your results with information about your methodology and sampling pool. Hold meetings to discuss the results of the survey and to plan follow-up actions.

In addition to conducting your own polling and public opinion surveys, it can also be of value to use polling data gathered by other organizations.

Third-party polling data can help build legitimacy for an issue and demonstrate its importance to the public at large. It can also be used to counter an opposing strategy being debated in the legislature or on Capitol Hill. You can also collect information from other

polls, and recycle key points in your messages, testimony and supporting materials. You can learn about many polls that might have data you can use by watching and reading news stories. You can also obtain a lot of information from the Internet through the following Web sites:

- http://www.pollingreport.com
- http://public.gallup.com/default.asp#redirect (see especially their tailored program for education)
- http://www.nytimes.com/library/politics/newspoll.html
- http://www.aapor.org/poq/POQINDEX.HTM - Public Opinion Quarterly, American Association of Public Opinion Research
- http://statlab.stat.yale.edu/SSDA/ropam.html - (listing of all polling organizations in U.S.)
- http://www.icorp.net/sv/ - Survey net
- http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/ - Roper Polls

Timeline/Assignments

As a first step of implementation, a timeline should be created to help ensure your activities and strategies are conducted at the most appropriate times. In addition to planning your own events you can use this to keep track of targets for your goals, track legislation, and record dates of important activities of allies and opponents.

Create a chart of your predetermined monthly communications activities and assign a person to be responsible for executing each activity. The chart should include the following areas:

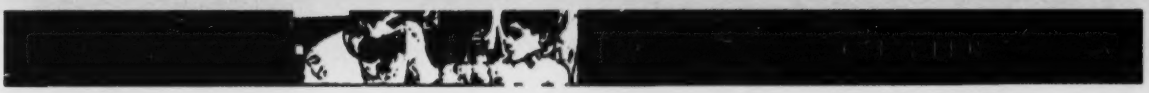
- activity;
- audience affected;
- key messages;
- date of execution; and
- staff person assigned.

Also, identify the cost of every project — both in terms of dollars and time. An activity's effect on your people and budget should be predetermined and allocated based on how effective the activity will be at helping you reach your goal.

Activities to Engage and Persuade

Raising Visibility in the Community

One of the first things you will need to do is make sure that your target audience is familiar with the issues. Much of this will be done through the media (see next chapter) but some of it will be done through one-on-one talking and grassroots events. Once you have started implementing your plans, it is imperative that you raise the visibility of your college and its issues. Hosting events will not only give you a chance to build awareness



of the issues important to you, but they will also help you build momentum and strengthen relationships with community leaders. You can raise visibility in the state or community for the Centennial and your college's issues and concerns by:

- **Making presentations to other organizations.** There are a number of organizations you might want to address, including state legislative committees, state higher education officials, business roundtables, chambers of commerce, civic groups, local manufacturer organizations, special-interest trade groups — such as software and hardware manufacturers — and others. To get on the agenda of groups, contact the heads and ask for a few moments to address the group's next meeting. Learn more about their current activities and then explain how your objectives are aligned with the group's goals and how both can be served by working together on a plan for improving the environment for community colleges. Sometimes you can use the approval of one group as an avenue for gaining the attention of another. Even if an organization is not immediately interested in your goals, try to keep the lines of communication open. If these community leaders don't support you now, regular communications will enhance the possibility they will do so later.

In delivering remarks, try to connect with the special concerns of the audience and use examples to illustrate key points. In your speech, use the messages and examples most relevant to the audience's concerns and stress specific activities the audience can do to help. Leave plenty of time for questions and answers, and never leave a presentation without making sure the assembled know how and where to contact you for follow-up.

- **Become involved in existing events.** In addition to trying to speak at meetings and conventions of business and education groups, look for additional ways to become visible. Contact the guidance office of your local high schools and ask to speak at career development days. When the local Kiwanis or Rotary Club meets to discuss local scholarship opportunities, ask to be in attendance. Career fairs sponsored by trade associations or local businesses are also opportunities. Work with these existing groups to adapt your messages and agenda into their planned activities. Also look for state fairs, tours of the chief state school office, and other statewide events where you can communicate your message.

- **Capitalizing on local issues.** The materials in this kit can be modified to fit specific local needs. Add in local examples and neighborhood concerns, and then stress how your solutions will create improvement in their own area. For example, you should try to obtain local data about job growth, budding or evolving industries and needs, missed opportunities to attract industry, welfare-to-work statistics, etc. Use this information in your correspondence and interaction with the community.

- **Hold town hall meetings.** Organizations in the United States have been using town hall meetings for centuries to relay information and discuss important issues. By gathering together the members of the local community at a town hall-style meeting, you can generate a lively and informative discussion on the issues of most importance to your school.

- **Sponsor a political debate or roundtable discussion.** Election years often provide the perfect forum for discussions of the most pressing education issues. By sponsoring a debate or roundtable discussion, or co-sponsoring it with other organizations or media outlets, you can shape a discussion that will focus directly on local community issues.

- **Conduct literature drops.** Recognizing that many individuals do not turn out for community events, it might be useful to deliver information directly to homes. By distributing several one-page fact sheets on important issues, you can reach those individuals who may not have been reached before.

- **Sponsor a local conference.** A conference can be the perfect method for cultivating community relationships and spotlighting the issues at hand. Working with your local contacts or the AACC and ACCT, you can use the hook of the Centennial to sponsor discussions on issues important to your survival.

- **Build private-sector partnerships.** Look for opportunities to partner with the private sector. Banks, utilities, and even grocery stores can be approached about including flyers about your curriculum and career placement successes in their lobbies or storefronts. Note all the other ways messages are relayed in your community and consider them for the Centennial. Be aware of postage meter imprints, member newsletters, bulletins of service clubs, religious groups, government agencies or other organizations; company employee newsletters, bulletin boards, signs on buses and/trash containers; bumper stickers, T-shirts, tote bags, bookmarks. The possibilities are endless.

- **Establish a Speaker's Bureau.** A speaker's bureau of articulate, enthusiastic, trained, and personable faculty, students, and staff is a major community relations asset. Promote the availability of your speakers through notices in the local media, expert guides, etc. In some communities, the chamber of commerce, the library, the school system or other organizations maintain a clearinghouse for available speakers.

organizing community forums and events

When organizing local events, there are some basic tactics that you must address before launching the event. These tactics include:

- **Building a database** - Invest in an easy-to-use database package to store and manage lists for mailings and meetings. You can also use this database to track information that you will use in preparing for meetings, developing messages, and planning activities. When you hold meetings, get addresses, phone numbers, and, if possible, e-mail addresses of the attendees.

- **Working with the right leaders** - Gaining third-party support for your college and its activities can make a difference in the ultimate success of your endeavors. As you develop your plans, schedule individual meetings with local business, civic, education, and political leaders to explain your goals and to ask for their support. Draw connections between the important roles of the community college and the interests of the individual.

- **Cultivating a strong volunteer base** - Put simply, you cannot do it all. No matter how motivated you may be, you need assistance to assemble and execute a successful event. To accomplish this, you will need to rely on volunteers, utilizing their skills and learning from their experiences. Having other individuals to take care of specific details will also free you up to think about the larger picture.

expanding the base of support

By coordinating events in your local community, you will be able to help expand the base of support for community colleges. Specifically, your activities will help:

- Identify previously unrecognized local supporters;
- Disseminate key information to interested parties in the local community;
- Gain the support of local elected officials;
- Force the implementation of key reforms that can make your job easier;
- Raise the recognition of your college as an education leader; and
- Generate media interest and coverage of your issues.

Following is a checklist of activities that you should attend to when planning a significant public event or conference.

SPECIAL EVENTS CHECKLIST

Planning

- ☐ Choose an effective planning committee
- ☐ Prepare a detailed budget for the event
- ☐ Arrange the best date (with an appropriate time without major conflicting events)
- ☐ Consider media deadlines
- ☐ Set a tentative master timetable

Speakers

- ☐ Obtain resumes and photographs
- ☐ Confirm speakers
- ☐ Plan itinerary
- ☐ Select hospitality people
- ☐ Get clear understanding of restrictions on news conferences, broadcast rights, and so forth
- ☐ Provide lodging
- ☐ Arrange transportation

Advance Promotion

- ☐ Make mailing lists of those interested in the event
- ☐ Set up mailing facilities and schedule
- ☐ Produce invitations and media advisories
- ☐ Mail invitations and media advisories

Special Publications

- ☐ Prepare printed program, establishing cost, copy, layout, and delivery date
- ☐ Prepare a promotional brochure
- ☐ Design and produce posters

Facilities/Personnel

- ☐ Choose the site and room(s) based on estimated attendance
- ☐ Make sure that facilities are available — and handicap-accessible
- ☐ Check audience sight lines
- ☐ Check lighting, ventilation, and acoustics
- ☐ Learn location of electrical outlets and light switches
- ☐ Confirm that rest rooms and cloak rooms are available
- ☐ Make food service arrangements; select menu
- ☐ Arrange for public address system
- ☐ Have audiovisual aids (screen, charts, easels) available
- ☐ Alert security or police

Registration table

- ☐ Signs (including alphabetical breakdown)
- ☐ Tables and chairs
- ☐ Name badges
- ☐ Pads and pencils
- ☐ Word processor
- ☐ Telephone
- ☐ Program and other literature
- ☐ People to staff the registration table

Other

- ☐ Prepare a coordinating sheet, assigning every job and detailing timing
- ☐ Arrange for parking facilities
- ☐ Set up signs
- ☐ Assign meeters and greeters
- ☐ Arrange for first aid facilities

Public Information: Advance

- ☐ Obtain photos of speakers and copies of speeches
- ☐ Make media calls to alert reporters
- ☐ Arrange for a media room and a special space for media
- ☐ Set up a news conference if appropriate
- ☐ Arrange media interviews in advance

Public Information: At Event

- ☐ Staff media room, if needed
- ☐ Provide copies of speeches, if available
- ☐ Direct the photographer to obtain a picture for post-publicity, newsletter, and archives
- ☐ Tape speeches, if appropriate

Public Information: After Event

- ☐ Send out a press release with a copy of speech and photos

Evaluations

- ☐ Send thank-you notes
- ☐ Complete financial accounting
- ☐ Compile a report on all aspects of an event. Critique errors and make recommendations for the future

Budget

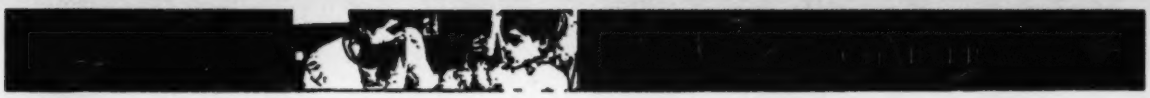
- ☐ Printing (invitations, reply cards, program, other promotional material)
- ☐ Mailing (postage, mailing services, secretarial assistance)
- ☐ Gifts for speakers and mementos for guests
- ☐ Decorations (flower arrangements and corsages, table decorations, plants for decorating room and stage, other)
- ☐ Catering and facility charges (meals, coffee breaks, receptions, room charges, other)
- ☐ Physical plant costs (cleaning of building, care of grounds, set-up of lectern, chairs, lights, tables, etc., positioning of banners, special equipment, rental of sound system, rental of equipment, chairs, tents, etc.)
- ☐ Speaker expenses (hotel costs, meal and other personal expenses, transportation, honoraria, other)
- ☐ Special services/miscellaneous [manufacturing of plaques or awards, security, photographer, taping (video and audio) for archives, museums]

Suggested Activities for the Community

There are numerous roles that various leaders of local community colleges can play in promoting the Centennial message. The following is a list of activities that trustees, governing boards, presidents, chancellors, faculty, students and alumni can participate in to support the Centennial efforts. These groups will also serve as your Centennial spokespersons on campus and in the community.

activities for the trustees, governing boards, chancellors

- Participate in speaker forums
- Write op-ed pieces
- Solicit financial support from business leaders in one-on-one meetings
- Meet with education policymakers at the state and local level to develop favorable legislation and to get support for Centennial proclamations
- Host receptions at the college for education policymakers
- Host receptions at the college for representatives of philanthropic foundations and the business community
- Participate in roundtable discussions with invited policy experts; invite the media
- Meet w/congressional reps to seek proclamations and support for important legislation



activities for the president

- Write op-ed pieces
- Participate in speaker forums
- Meet with the editorial boards of local media
- Meet with business leaders to develop employee training programs
- Host luncheons with students to solicit support and ideas for Centennial celebrations
- Establish a working committee with student representatives and business representatives on Centennial activities and events
- Solicit endowments for lecture series in the name of the Centennial
- Establish a Centennial-named scholarship fund
- Endow a Centennial faculty chair

activities for the faculty

- Participate in lecture series on program related topic
- Participate in fine arts night
- Stage faculty-student sports events as fundraisers for Centennial and other school activities
- Be available for media interviews on notable accomplishments, awards, publications

activities for the students

- Sponsor fundraisers, including car washes, dance marathons, battle of the bands and other events designed to attract community attention and contribute proceeds to Centennial scholarship fund
- Participate in faculty-student sports events
- Fly the Centennial flag at sporting events, community events etc.
- Volunteer to distribute Centennial collateral — including bookmarks, screensavers etc., — to local businesses

activities for the alumni

- Attend events sponsored by your alma mater
- Participate in information/question and answer sessions to answer current students questions about your career
- Display the Centennial materials at your workplace
- Volunteer on campus for various campus and community events
- Organize an alumni fundraising drive

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

Why Is the Media So Important?

Working with the media is one of the best ways to disseminate information about the Centennial and your community college. Through the media, you have instant access to students, parents, administrators, government officials, area businesses and the community at-large.

The difference between being an adequate media strategist and an exceptional one rests with your understanding of the media's needs and your ability to take full advantage of the various opportunities each medium offers.

Understanding the Media

The "media" encompass both print and broadcast news organizations. Print media include daily and weekly newspapers, news wires, and magazines. Broadcast media include television and radio. Each of these news outlets can be used in a number of different ways to reach different audiences. To communicate with the media effectively, it is important to keep their goals in mind. These include:

- To inform;
- To advise;
- To entertain; and
- To make a profit.

Remember that although media are under pressure to produce and file stories, they are not always going to produce a story about your program just because you share information with them. Pitching an idea, story, or event to the media takes hard work and planning. You must carefully craft the messages you wish to convey, produce support materials, and plan a comprehensive strategy for your outreach efforts.

Following are a few basic tips to remember when dealing with the media:

- Don't be afraid to approach the media with an issue or story idea.
- Try to keep relationships with the media friendly and honest.
- Make it easy for the media to learn about the events or priority issues of your organization by maintaining open lines of communication. The easier you make it for reporters and editors to do their jobs, the more likely you are to receive favorable coverage.
- Take advantage of breaking news in education, social policy, business development, science, and technology by offering comment from an expert resource and spokesperson. Let the media and the community know that someone is able to discuss the local impact of a national story. If an issue or story

"breaks" on the national level, look to identify an item that has local impact. Offer interviews, up-to-date information, and anything that can give a reporter a fresh angle.

- A single media liaison from your organization should be identified to prevent redundant or conflicting information from reaching reporters. The liaison should be responsible for making regular contacts with reporters and editors and responding to media inquiries. An official spokesperson — usually the team leader or chair of your organizing effort — should be the person most often quoted in news stories.

Working With the Media

Strong media contacts and relationships can be one of the biggest benefits to a communications effort promoting the Centennial. A good media relationship can make it easier to get through to a reporter or to convince a reporter to cover your story.

establishing and maintaining media relationships

As a communications professional, it is your responsibility not only to know the name of the person to call with a story, but to know the person to call. You should understand the type of news the reporters cover, the types of stories they write or produce, their style of writing or production, their attitude and opinion about your program, and the times they prefer to be called. On the flip side, reporters must know that you are easy to work with, that you can help them in a bind, that you'll give them quality story ideas and won't waste their time, and that you are a valuable resource of ideas and information. The results of such a relationship will reflect on your program through increased positive media coverage.

building media relationships

If you are unfamiliar with the media in your area, your first step is to introduce yourself and your program to key reporters. You can do this through a letter or, more personally, through a phone call. When making this initial contact, you should offer the reporter background materials about the Centennial and your college, and also set up a time to meet and talk at greater length.

In addition to providing background, you can also offer to take reporters on a tour of your school. By having a reporter visit your school, he or she may begin to get a deeper appreciation for the innovative programs offered at your college and its value to the community.

Another way of building media relationships is to get involved in journalism associations that represent other college spokespeople. Conferences, meetings, and networking events will provide you with the opportunity to get to know reporters in a collaborative, non-threatening environment.

Once the media contacts have been established, it is important to continually nurture these relationships. You can do so in the following ways:

- Put members of the media on the mailing lists of your external publications;
- Forward new information (data and demographics) about your programs to the media;
- Coordinate meetings for the media with key members of your faculty and administration;
- Develop source lists of faculty and staff around breaking news stories; and
- Send the media new story ideas involving your program (through a letter or a phone call).

serving as a resource

If members of the media perceive you as an ally and a resource for background information, contacts, story ideas, and comment on breaking news, your job will be that much easier — the media will begin to come to you. You should regard this as a compliment, and even though handling the extra demands of the media may take extra time, it will ultimately benefit you and your school.

media listings and directories

To keep good media lists for making telephone contact or sending print materials, you should include background information and carefully selected names, addresses, and telephone and fax numbers for every news organization, reporter, and editor who wants (and is most likely to use) the materials you send. The media listing should be as accurate and up-to-date as possible. Include information about deadlines, circulation size, distribution/viewing area, ownership, any apparent political leanings and any special topics of interest or format of copy. Also make note of any copy deadlines and times of news broadcasts. Track the information in a computerized database.

When putting together a media listing, use reference books available in the public library. These include the *Editor and Publisher Yearbook*, *Working Press of the Nation*, and *N.W. Ayer Directory*. State press associations and many local phone companies also produce media directories. If you have no luck finding information from these sources, then call the station or publication directly.

What Makes News?

Members of the media are under pressure to produce. News, radio, and TV reporters compete to get the most interesting stories and the best sources or quotes. What makes news is what interests people — how local and national events affect the community; innovative ways of doing something; what makes life better, richer, or

more colorful. These are items people want and need to know about.

The media are also interested in activities of people who have power, influence events, or shape public opinion. Reporters are usually more interested in tangible issues — ones that affect the wallet and stir emotion — than in abstract concepts and ideas. Syndicated columnists, editors, and feature writers, on the other hand, are often more interested in opinions and trends.

TIPS ON GENERATING FAVORABLE COVERAGE

You can stir media interest by:

- Generating a report on a local issue;
- Establishing a commission to examine a local issue;
- Adapting national reports and surveys locally;
- Releasing the findings of a poll or survey;
- Organizing special projects for the community;
- Staging a debate on a topical or controversial issue;
- Organizing a tour of a new facility at your school or a new program;
- Making a faculty member available for quotation on his or her area of expertise at a timely moment;
- Presenting an award or giving a scholarship;
- Holding a contest that draws attention to high school student achievement; and
- Inviting prominent speakers to campus.

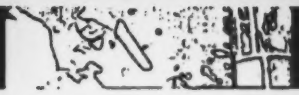
The Different Types of Media

daily newspapers

The 1600-plus daily newspapers — "dailies" — in the United States provide an estimated 113 million individuals with their primary source of news every day. Dailies appear in morning and/or evening editions seven days a week.

Daily newspapers cover national, state, and local education initiatives; elementary and secondary school education; and other related topics from many different angles — from writing a profile on a state education leader to covering a local school board meeting.

The better you understand the various ways dailies can cover a story, the more successful you will be as a spokesperson and the more likely you will be to generate solid media and community attention to your program. To take full advantage of the print medium, it is important to identify the right person to contact on any given story and know when and how to approach him or her.



Newspaper Deadlines	Morning Papers	Evening Papers	Sunday Papers
General News	4:00 p.m. the day before publication	5:30 p.m. the day before publication	12:00 p.m. the day before publication
Late-Breaking News	8:00 p.m. the day of publication	9:00 p.m. the day of publication	
Major Late-Breaking News	4:00 p.m. the day of publication	5:30 p.m. the day of publication	
Features			5:00 p.m. the Wed. before publications (preprinted)

Who to Contact: The editorial board determines and writes the paper's official position on various issues. Each weekday, these commentaries are found on the editorial page. In major papers, a special section of the Sunday paper is often devoted entirely to editorial commentary.

Op-ed/opinion page editors determine which opinion editorials will be published in the paper. Op-eds usually run on the page opposite the editorials. They are approximately 400-800 words long. Some smaller dailies have one person who serves as both op-ed and editorial page editor.

weekly newspapers

Weekly newspapers (or "weeklies") are usually either suburban papers found in close proximity to large cities or rural papers that provide isolated areas with a link to the nearest town or county seat. They may be offered for sale at newsstands, by subscription, or distributed free of charge.

Weeklies primarily focus on events and issues that are directly tied to the communities they serve. Most weeklies also offer a calendar of area events. Contact the calendar editor about upcoming community meetings or other events.

Many weeklies are understaffed and have a limited ability to leave the news room to cover events, so often the reporters will write stories from press releases or interviews.

Who to Contact: Although the larger weeklies may have a reporter assigned to cover education issues, most assignments are made by the paper's editor or publisher.

Weekly Newspaper Deadlines: Deadlines vary depending on the size of the paper. Most are two to three days (or more) before publication.

wire services

Wire services, such as the Associated Press (AP) or Reuters, are national or international news organizations that provide print and broadcast media around the country with up-to-the-minute news. The information is transmitted directly into the news room through telephone lines, microwave signals, or other electronic means of delivery.

Wire stories, especially those concerning out-of-town news, are frequently picked up and run verbatim by print and broadcast outlets. Mid-size and smaller news organizations rely heavily on the wires for coverage outside of their areas. Every large news organization subscribes to at least one wire service to keep abreast of news and to back up its own operations. For that reason, it is critical to be included in wire story coverage. In addition to breaking news, wires also run general news articles, special features on human interest stories, and columns by well-known reporters. Here are some tips on how wire services work:

- Wire service bureaus are typically located in larger cities, but they frequently use "stringers" (local reporters) to cover news in other areas.
- All publicity materials should go to the nearest wire service bureaus and/or their local "stringer."
- Associated Press has radio bureaus that transmit stories to stations regionally and nationally. Many states have radio networks, too. Consult a local media directory to determine the names of local news services and the issues they cover.
- Wire services, like other types of media, work under deadlines. Larger bureaus are staffed 24 hours a day and have continual deadlines. Week-days during regular business hours, however, are best for reaching reporters who cover specific beats.

magazines

Magazines generally offer more comprehensive, in-depth coverage of a subject than newspapers. Consequently, they also demand longer lead-times. Getting covered in a magazine usually requires advance planning and a proactive media strategy.

Many magazines have editorial calendars, which provide information about special issues or features planned for the year. To find out what a magazine has planned, request an editorial calendar from the magazine's advertising department at the beginning of each year.

Become familiar with the regular features that appear in every issue and think about where and how a story about your community college's efforts to provide a quality education for all students might fit into their format. The editors are always looking for information that will be newsworthy when the magazine is published.

Who to Contact: At smaller magazines, the editor-in-chief makes most of the assignment decisions. Larger magazines usually have different reporters assigned to cover specific beats (e.g., politics, national news, education, business). Be sure to include in your list of magazines those local and regional publications most often read by tourists and residents.

Magazine Deadlines: News magazines (*Time*, *Newsweek*, etc.) usually have deadlines a week in advance for weeklies and a month in advance for monthlies. Other magazines (consumer, fashion, trade, etc.) have longer deadlines, approximately three to six weeks in advance for weeklies and two to three months in advance for monthlies.

television

Think "pictures" when you think of television news. Television is different from all other media in that it demands visual presentation of your message. To succeed in generating TV coverage for stories related to the Centennial and community colleges at large, you must be able to differentiate between print and TV stories. For example, the image of parents and teachers staging a demonstration in a classroom or students working with innovative technology is more likely to attract a TV crew than "talking heads" announcing the Centennial at a news conference.

Beyond simply identifying which of your events will be appropriate for TV coverage, try to devise creative ways to enrich the visual aspects of the story you are trying to tell. Stage visually appealing events and highlight opportunities for television reporters to show people in action — teachers and students engaged in creative and engaging lessons, students volunteering in the community or business leaders mentoring students on your campus. To maximize your use of television, remember that this medium provides a dual route for conveying your message — through the spoken word and through images. Consider the backdrop at a news conference. Encourage participants at your events to wear your college t-shirts and buttons or carry banners or signs to increase visibility and recognition.

Although air time on TV newscasts is limited, local stations usually have at least three scheduled news broadcasts a day where you can seek coverage — one at noon, another in the late afternoon or early evening (between 4:00-6:00 p.m.), and a final report around 10:00-11:00 p.m. Generally, noon and late afternoon broadcasts report "lighter" news — special segments and human interest stories — while the early evening broadcasts serve as the station's primary newscasts. The late news is usually a final update of the day's events.

Who to Contact: Typically, you will want to deal with the station's assignment editor or news desk. Larger stations usually have three assignment editors — one for the noon newscasts, one for both evening newscasts, and a weekend assignment editor. While few stations have a specialized education reporter, there are generally several correspondents who cover human-interest and feature news stories.

Television Deadlines: It is best to give TV stations several days to put together an education story. Do not call during or immediately before a broadcast unless you have major breaking news. And remember that TV reporters are busiest in the late afternoon before the evening newscasts. Because the news is constantly changing and television newscasts cover a limited number of stories in their half-hour or hour time block, you will find that TV assignment editors are extremely selective. Breaking news often forces TV stations to change their schedule of news segments at the last minute.

A SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT CABLE TELEVISION

Local cable television stations are an often overlooked but extremely effective means of reaching large audiences. Include cable TV in your media efforts whenever possible. And remember, public access stations have a legal obligation to carry a certain amount of locally originated programming. In addition to their regularly scheduled public affairs and discussion programs, many local cable operators will provide their facilities to help you produce news and entertainment programs on topics of community interest.

Because local cable television stations face a highly competitive market, the size of their audience is typically smaller. Be sure to publicize appearances with fliers, in newsletters, and by word of mouth.

tips for television interviews

Television news often utilizes interviews. Interviews can take a number of forms. You can be interviewed on a television program, be part of a call in talk show, or be caught by cameras as you step outside your office. In any case, the key to successfully getting your point across is to be prepared. By knowing the issue about which you are being interviewed, concentrating on two or three points central to the Centennial, and by refining your responses and having a concise, quotable statement ready in advance, you can control the process.

There are a few simple rules to follow when being interviewed on television by a reporter.

- **Anticipate questions that will be asked, and practice brief, succinct responses.** If you panic while on the air, pause to gather your thoughts. If you happen to make an erroneous statement, refute it immediately, and restate your case.
- **Where possible, simplify the questions being posed and avoid complicated, confusing explanations.** Do this by concentrating on two or three points about the topic you are discussing.
- **Reinforce and repeat your side of the story.** If you are stuck for a response, stall for time by answering a question with a question or ask the interviewer to rephrase the question. A simple, short answer can throw the interviewer off base.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

- **Be wary of certain deadly questions.** Often, they start with such phrases as , "Isn't it true that...," or, "How do you justify...," or, "So what you're really saying is..." When you hear reporters frame questions in this way, they may be trying to put quotes in your mouth.

- **Learn when a reporter is honestly seeking information and when he or she is trying to bait you.** In the former instance, use the opportunity to educate the reporter; in the latter instance, stay calm and rephrase the question before answering. Some reporters will try to ask a series of questions at the same time. Don't panic, and don't try to deal with all of the questions at once.

- **Focus your answer on the question you wish to address.** Often reporters will state an opinion or value judgment as a self-evident fact, and then ask a question on that "fact." If you answer entrapping questions, you may give credibility to the charge or premise on which the question was based. Rephrase the trap question and use it to lead to the points you want to emphasize.

- **"Off the record" comments can be dangerous.** Never say anything to a reporter you do not want repeated.

- **When you appear on television,** avoid white clothing that can cause a glare and also glasses, jewelry, and vibrating prints that are distracting.

radio

The influence of radio broadcasters in the daily lives of Americans is often grossly underestimated and occasionally altogether overlooked by even the most experienced media strategists. Radio is often described as the "captive electronic medium" because it reaches people while they are doing other things — in their cars, on the way to and from work, in their homes and offices, even while they exercise with a Walkman.

Radio programming offers a variety of formats for communicating to a number of distinct audiences. The most common radio-station formats and their primary/target audiences are:

- **All-News:** adults, heaviest listening during morning and afternoon rush hours;
- **All-Talk:** adults (over 40), heaviest listening mid-day and evening;
- **Easy Listening:** adults (over 30);
- **Middle of the Road (MOR):** adults (over 30; slightly younger than easy listening);
- **Classical:** adults (usually higher-income bracket);
- **Country-Western:** adults (over 30);
- **Religious:** adults (slightly older than MOR audience);
- **Black:** black adults (age varies depending on format within category);
- **Top 40 Rock:** youth (18-35);

- Soul: black youth (teens to mid-30's); and

- Urban: young adults (20+), contemporary music.

Each radio station offers regular and special programming combinations.

- **News programs** provide a vehicle for releasing important and breaking news. Radio newscasts usually air at least twice every hour, allowing your statement to be edited into many sound bites for repeated use throughout the day.

- **Regularly scheduled programs** (interviews, talk-shows, etc.) provide a public platform to discuss education reform and your community's efforts to achieve education goals in greater length and detail than in normal radio newscasts — which are generally very brief.

- **Call-in shows** often serve as the modern equivalent of the town meeting. The most common tend to focus on issues of controversy and community concern. Although call-in programs can be unpredictable, they are very popular with the general public in large and small markets, and extremely influential in determining public opinion.

- **Public service and public affairs programs** are regularly or specially scheduled programs that usually feature a recognizable host.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMMING

Public affairs programming on both radio and television takes several forms: interviews, documentaries, panel discussions, feature reports, and editorial comments. Since policies differ on public affairs programming, contact the public affairs director at each station to introduce yourself and find out what types of programs they offer viewers and listeners.

Use this information to:

- Work on program ideas that fit the available formats. Place community college allies on these programs to discuss important issues;

- Send a written proposal to the public affairs director outlining your ideas; and

- Follow up with a phone call to discuss them.

Tools for Informing the Media

In establishing relations with the media, a consistent set of outreach vehicles are commonly employed. These include the "basic" media advisory, fact sheet and press release but also more substantive tools such as an op-ed, public service announcement, editorial board meeting, or letter to the editor.

media advisory

Purpose — A media or news advisory might be used to alert editors and reporters to specific events and/or activities your community college may be planning around the Centennial. The media advisory should explain the "who, what, when, where, why, and how" of these events and should provide just enough information to entice the media to attend.

NOTE: Media advisories should not be confused with press releases. Advisories are meant to persuade reporters to cover an activity before it happens. Remember, you want the media to attend your events so that you gain exposure and reporters get the whole story. If you give them all the information in the advisory, they can easily write the story from their desks.

How to Use — Send advisories to the reporters on your media lists, which should include journalists who regularly cover education, business, social policy and other topics important to the Centennial and your college.

If you do not have a reporter or editor's name, address advisories to the "Assignment Editor" at television stations, the "News Director" at radio stations, and the "City Editor" at newspapers. Also, make sure to send an advisory to state and/or local wire services for inclusion in their "daybook" listing of events scheduled that day.

Even if you know that reporters or news organizations are not likely to attend your event — because of time limitations or other reasons — send an advisory to let them know about it anyway. They may want to schedule a one-on-one interview or contact a wire service to cover the event for them.

Timing — An advisory sent too far in advance may get lost in the shuffle. Mail advisories at least three to five days in advance but no more than a week, unless holidays will interfere with the timing. If you don't have this lead time, hand deliver or FAX the advisory to local media no later than the morning of the day before the event.

Format — A media advisory should:

- Have a brief headline describing the event;
- Have the words "MEDIA ADVISORY" at the top left corner of the page;
- State the date of release, usually the day it is to be mailed;
- Provide contact names and phone numbers;
- Visually highlight the date, time, and place that the news event will occur;
- Give a brief description of the purpose of the event and what will take place, such as a list of key speakers;
- Be sure to underscore any strong visual aspects so media decision-makers will know if it would be wise to send a photographer or camera crew;
- Be no longer than one page, as a rule of thumb; and
- Indicate the end of the page by using the universal end-symbols recognized by news organizations: "-30-" or "###."

press release

Purpose — A press release summarizes and presents important stories for the media. The release should frame your message accurately and provide background information and quotes from reputable and knowledgeable spokespeople. A press release helps to make a reporter's job easier, which in turn benefits your efforts.

How to Use — The press release should be the key component of any media kit or information packet. It should be written with the most important information in the first and second paragraphs. Less important points and expansion of overall issues should be included in later paragraphs. As with the media advisory, press releases should be targeted to specific reporters or to the assignment editor or city editor for distribution to the appropriate reporter.

Timing — Most press releases can be distributed at your events. This keeps you in control of the "news" until you are ready to release it. If reporters cannot attend your event, be sure you distribute the release to them in a timely fashion — the same day, if possible. In some cases, information will take reporters longer to review and interpret. For example, a report on a poll will require the media to check the numbers and understand your analysis. In these instances, send a release with more lead time and "EMBARGO" the information. An "EMBARGO" means that a reporter can read the information but cannot make it public until the date noted. The terminology to use is: "Hold For Release — Embargoed until July 4, 1997 at 10:00 A.M. EST." This ethically binds the media to your restrictions.

press conference

Purpose — Press conferences are used to convene media. They release new information on an issue or a new angle on a previous story; announce a position, future event, or new project; or launch a campaign.

When to Use — Generally, there are two types of press conferences, proactive and reactive. The proactive press conference would be appropriate, for example, for announcing that your college will be participating in the Centennial by embarking on a certain event or set of activities. A reactive press event would respond to breaking news such as the release of a report on college tuition or graduate placement.

Regardless of the type of news conference, use this vehicle cautiously. If you call on the media to cover a press conference, make sure that you have "real news" to deliver or you may risk damaging your reputation as a credible news source.

Timing — Schedule a proactive press conference to coordinate with media deadlines. Generally, the event should be held between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. The best days of the week to hold a press conference are Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday. Fridays tend to be poor news days because your story will most likely appear in Saturday's paper, which has a lower circulation. Because of the weekend, Mondays do not allow for last-minute notification of reporters.

Schedule a reactive news conference as close as possible to the breaking news to which you are responding. For example, if an education funding bill is being introduced in the state legislature that has an impact on your

institution, convene a news conference that morning, or no later than that afternoon, to react to the bill's implications.

In the reactive news conference, timing is everything. If you wait too long, you will miss being included in the story.

Notification — When you arrange a news conference, send out a media advisory to the appropriate reporters, editors, and columnists. Make follow-up calls at least two days before the event to encourage attendance. This also will help you determine the size of your event.

Follow-up — Sometimes, even the best-planned, most publicized news conferences can fail to attract media or be "upstaged" by unanticipated breaking news. Don't give up or become discouraged. Now is the time to follow-up with those unable to attend in order to secure their interest and coverage. Be sure to:

- Call to inform reporters of what was said at the news conference. Offer to provide them with an interview so that they can cover the story; and
- Make sure all the media outlets receive a press release or media kit along with the speakers' statements and any other pertinent information. (Distribute these by FAX or hand deliver if there is a chance that a news organization will cover the story that day.)

op-eds

Purpose — Opinion pieces, or op-eds, appear opposite the editorial page and are submitted to daily and weekly newspapers to express the author's position on a particular topic.

When to Use — Write and submit op-eds when you want to express an opinion on events and activities of concern to your program. Op-eds are good vehicles for explaining complicated issues — particularly when you are concerned that your message will not be adequately or effectively communicated through regular news coverage.

How to Use — It is a good idea to call the op-ed editor to see if they are interested in the topic and your perspective before investing the time in preparing the piece. During the conversation, explain why your views are important to their readers.

Most daily papers have an op-ed review process that can take anywhere from one to 10 days. Many of the larger dailies will require "exclusivity," meaning they will consider your piece only when they are the sole paper receiving it. Be aware of any exclusivity clauses before contacting other newspapers.

When there are no exclusivity issues involved, do a mass mailing to papers and include a one-page "pitch" letter explaining why your opinion should be published, why it is current and relevant, and how your information will be of interest to the paper's readership.

Keep in mind that the "author" of an op-ed is considered at least as important, if not more important, than the message. Make sure that the author you select is the most influential on the topic.

editorial board meetings

Editorial board meetings may create an opportunity to focus media decision-makers on the Centennial, its significance to your school and your community. The best scenario is to meet before the paper takes a position on a given issue. State your priority concerns in a straightforward manner and seek to shape the board's opinion in your favor. Remember, the staff on the newspaper would rather hear positive input before an editorial appears than handle complaints later.

Arranging the Meeting. Call the editorial department to get the name of the editorial page editor and find out if an editorial writer is assigned to or interested in education issues. (Small papers may have only one editorial writer — often the editor. Large papers may have a staff of five to ten editorial writers.)

Submit a letter to the appropriate member(s) of the editorial staff. State the issue and underscore the timely nature of your request to meet with them. Be sure to stress the local angle, such as describing how technology is having an impact on the curriculum offered at your school. Include background about your most recent activities and the current instructional issues or projects in which you are engaged. Provide necessary contact names and phone numbers. Follow up with a telephone call to restate your request and secure interest in a meeting.

Preparing for the Meeting. The typical editorial board meeting will be with two or three members of the newspaper's staff. Often included are the editorial page editor, an editorial writer, and the general reporter assigned to the issue.

Arrive on time and don't show up with a "war party." Bring from your institution only those people necessary to effectively present your case, such as the college's usual spokesperson, a faculty member conversant on the issue and possibly a student.

Prepare persuasive arguments in advance. Know all sides of the issues, pros and cons, and the latest developments. Research carefully how this newspaper has covered the issue in the past. Know who wrote the stories. Often you may find you like or dislike the way one particular reporter or editor handles an issue. In this case, be prepared to note any discrepancies in the paper's coverage.

Be courteous and professional. Unless you have an already long-established feud with the paper, don't treat this first meeting as a heated debate. Even then, it is unwise to get overly emotional. This is the time to politely build the arguments that you believe the newspaper has not adequately addressed.

letters to the editor

Purpose — Letters to the editor should be relied upon to respond negatively or positively to an article or editorial that a newspaper, journal, or magazine has printed on an issue — or to communicate your opinion without going through the editorial approval process required for publishing op-eds.

When to Use — Write letters to respond to editorials or news coverage that is centrally linked to questions about your college or the Centennial. Keep your eyes open for opportunities that may, at first blush, seem to be only loosely connected.

Don't expect your letters to be printed every time. Most papers have policies on how frequently they will publish the same writer's views.

Format — A letter to the editor should convey the most important message in the first paragraph. If you are responding to an article or editorial printed in that paper, reference the title, date, and author of the original piece in your opening sentence. The letter should be between 100 and 400 words. Pieces that are short and sweet are more apt to be printed. Remember to include your name, address, and daytime and evening telephone numbers so the paper can verify who wrote the letter.

Timing — Many newspapers will print several responses to one article on the same day. It is not unusual to see letters to the editor regarding material printed two months ago. This does not mean that you should wait to respond. Submit a letter as soon as possible — usually within a few days to a week of a story's appearance. Check several of the responses in the "Letters to the Editor" section in your local papers to get an idea of the newspaper's time-frame for printing letters.

radio actualities

An actuality is a piece of sound — a recorded press release — taken from an actual event, such as a news conference, speech, debate, or rally. The message is fed via telephone from an audiotape to the radio station. Often radio stations are understaffed and not able to send a reporter to cover a news conference. Consequently, they may be pleased to hear actualities.

An alternative to an actuality from a live event is a pre-recorded statement. For example, your college president might read a short statement into a tape recorder, which you feed to the radio stations.

Radio stations will accept both actualities or recorded statements, but are more likely to take actualities — they have more "oomph" since they originate from a news event.

Promoting Actualities to Radio Stations. Always be prepared when calling the station. Be familiar with the material on the tape and know enough about the nature of the news event to offer background information to the reporter. Also, alert the reporter to the total length of the recorded message before you originate the feed. Generally, the shorter the tape, the better. Ideally, condense the message to no longer than 30 or 40 seconds.

Who Accepts Actualities? If the station's only source of news is wire copy or other written accounts of a story, it is more than likely the station will be eager to take your product because it can lend credibility to what could be an otherwise dull newscast. There are 7,000 radio stations in the U.S., many of which do not have the financial resources to subscribe to radio networks. Also, when calling a station with an actuality, don't call during busy news times (7:00 -8:30 a.m., 11:30- 12:30 p.m. and 4:30 - 6:00 p.m.).

How Do I Feed Actualities? A few basic pieces of equipment are needed — alligator clips to send the feed through the telephone to the radio stations, a cassette recorder, and a microphone — all of which are available from a local electronics store.

1. Select an excerpt from the tape.
2. Place the plug end of the alligator clips in the monitor outlet of the tape recorder. On some recorders, the monitor is indicated by a drawing of an ear.
3. Remove the cover of the telephone mouthpiece and clamp the red and black alligator clips on either of the two metal tabs.

(WARNING: Once the telephone mouthpiece and phone insert are detached, you cannot talk with people on the other end. You can hear them, but they cannot hear you.)

Another method for feeding actualities is to use a telephone answering machine. Record the message that you wish to offer radio stations on the cassette tape for "outgoing" announcements. Call the radio station, and when they acknowledge interest in accepting the feed, simply press the button to play the outgoing message from your machine.

public service announcements

Free air time for public service announcements (also called public service advertisements or PSAs) is available on television and radio to community organizations. These messages must contain noncommercial information that is beneficial to the community.

Any message that is controversial, political, or self-serving is not considered a public service. For a PSA to be accepted for broadcast, it should stress a call to action: describe how community colleges have been serving the needs of the nation and the community for 100 years, and that they need the financial support of the community to continue their work.

Public service announcements are not a replacement for paid advertising. Radio and TV stations will base their decision to use a PSA on whether or not the message is truly of service to the public — not just of service to the Centennial or your institution.

Before launching a PSA campaign, contact public service directors at individual stations and arrange to meet with them personally to learn more about their guidelines on PSA acceptance. These people are valuable station contacts and might be interested in supporting local events tied to the Centennial.

Determine what their format requirements are for PSAs, and ask if they are willing to help produce the spots. Radio stations will either use cassettes, reel-to-reels, and/or scripts. It is a good idea to include the written scripts even if not requested. Television stations usually use three-quarter- or one-inch tapes and will rarely take the time to produce their own from your written scripts.

Both radio and television PSAs are produced in varying lengths.

- 10 seconds (approximately 25 words)
- 30 seconds (approximately 75 words)
- 60 seconds (approximately 150 words)

When writing public service announcements, keep the following in mind:

- Write short, upbeat sentences;
- Issue a "call for action"; and
- Tell the audience to contact your organization for more information. Use a telephone number only if your office can handle a volume of incoming calls in the early morning or evening hours.

PSAs should be mailed to a target list of stations along with a cover letter explaining the purpose of the PSAs, their length, and any other information to encourage usage.

To monitor PSA usage, include a "reply card" which stations can send back to indicate if, when, and how often the PSAs were used. The reply card can be simply laid out on a personal computer, or even handwritten on index cards. Design it to resemble a magazine business reply card and pre-stamp it if your budget permits.

Have a staffer make a round of calls a few weeks after the PSAs are distributed to make sure they arrived. Ask when the station plans to air the messages. Let them know that in your publicity efforts to announce the public service advertising campaign, you would like to provide people with information on when to tune in to the station to see or hear the spots — a trick that often secures better placement for your messages. (Radio PSAs are included in the last section of the kit).

Selling Your Story to the Media

Press releases and op-eds are generally not enough to get your story covered. You will therefore need to deal directly with the reporter to get them interested in the your story.

media calls

After media advisories and/or press releases have been distributed, media calls provide the communications professional with the opportunity to "sell" the story to a reporter, editor, or producer. For many individuals, making media calls is the least appealing part of their job. However, with thorough preparation and existing media relationships, media calls become easier and more successful.

Before you make follow-up calls to the media, you should be completely prepared.

- Compile and organize all necessary information;
- Confirm the participation and schedules of all spokespersons;
- Brainstorm a pitch and/or news hook;
- Draft a loose script of key points to mention as you pitch your story; and
- Understand any other current relevant news stories and how your story might relate.

While making media calls, you should remember the following tips:

- Never call when you know a reporter is on deadline (the best time to call is between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.);
- Ask if a reporter is busy. If the answer is yes, ask when you can call back;
- Keep a log of media responses. Keep close track of each reporter's response, particularly if you need to call them back;
- Reinforce how and why your story will appeal to the reporter's readers, listeners, or viewers; and
- Bend over backwards to respond to a reporter's requests.

following through on a story

Sometimes, getting a reporter interested in a story is only half the battle. Often, getting a reporter to write or cover a story requires consistent, thorough follow-through, research, and support.

For example, you might try to pitch how your college has landed funds from a major corporation to do training on new cutting-edge technology devices. A reporter might find the concept interesting, but may not be sold on covering it. It is your responsibility to be creative and close the deal. You might locate a student with an interesting story to tell — perhaps a student who is just coming back into the job market after raising children — who is willing to be followed around by a reporter for a day. You might locate teachers to discuss how this program has changed the outlook of their students. Or you might compile outside research supporting the success of similar programs. By supplying a reporter with this information, they may not only find the story more interesting and realize their efforts will be minimal, but they just may cover the story!

creating a hook

One of the most challenging aspects of a communications director's job is to generate coverage. While your school may not provide you with newsworthy information on a daily basis, it is up to you to be creative and find interesting opportunities and new avenues for conveying information about your school to the media. To do this, you must create a "hook,"

an aspect of the story that makes it interesting or distinctive. Often, the Centennial will be enough of a hook if you can tie it to a local angle.

When trying to convince a reporter to cover a story relating to your program, it is essential that you convince that reporter that your story will grab their audience's attention. Whether you are conducting a major event, releasing a report, or just trying to gain recognition for a particular program, you must convince the media that your story is relevant to their audience. Monitoring the media will assist you in finding hooks. Below, we have listed several questions to ask yourself as you create a hook.

- What audiences will this story appeal to?
- Why will an audience care about this story?
- How will this story affect the lives of these audiences? How will it make their lives better or worse?
- What current national events or issues relate to this story (i.e., pending state or federal legislation, political or community conflicts, national movements/ trends, holidays or seasons)?
- How have similar stories been covered in the past?
- What perspective does this particular media outlet take on this issue? What will make them receptive to this story idea?

With the answers to these questions, you can begin to weave a finely tailored news hook for your story. You should remember that hooks will vary depending on which media outlet you pitch. For example, your hook may be very different for a national publication and a local publication, or for a newspaper or television news broadcast.

Often times, the easiest stories to get placed are those that have a "hook" to other big events in the news. Exploiting these opportunities is essential for success.

TIPS ON PITCHING STORIES TO THE MEDIA

- Use regional angles to localize national stories about the Centennial. For example, show how your college has grown and changed over its own history, and how it has had a positive impact on the community. Focus on one of your programs that is making a difference in your community.
- Be creative, but to the point. Reporters are often in a rush and have limited time to listen to your story over the phone. It is important to list priorities of what you want to say before picking up the phone.
- Use statistics and other data that reporters can readily understand and use. Data can be powerful ammunition to back up your main points. Avoid using more than two numbers in a sentence and try to express data in percentages : 52 percent, two out of three, more than half, etc.
- Be prepared and stay focused. Draft a script before calling reporters, jot down a few critical notes, and practice before making the calls.

- Know when reporters have covered education issues in the past. Mentioning a recent story the reporter has covered is often an easy way to lead into a pitch. For example, "I noticed you wrote a story recently concerning the skyrocketing costs of college tuition. Do you know that many of our students, for a fraction of the cost of a private university, are earning credits that they can apply for transfer to a four-year school?"

- Suggest additional resources. Tell reporters which schools they might visit or provide names of students or faculty who have agreed to talk to reporters.

- Avoid calling reporters during their deadlines, such as before top-of-the hour news broadcasts. Find out the deadlines for your local newspapers and television stations in advance.

- Remember — pitching a story to television media is different from pitching to print media. To interest a television reporter, the story must be visual. For example, if you are releasing information about the impact of a new high tech training program, make sure that photographers have access to the student using the equipment.

monitoring the media for related news

The communications staff should subscribe to all local newspapers, magazines, and newsletters. (You may also want to subscribe to a few national publications, such as *The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, Time,* and *Newsweek.*) While you will never have time to read every publication cover to cover, you should create a list of relevant issues that may provide you with news hooks (i.e., stories relating to higher education, tuition, job training, remediation, etc.). Each morning have a member of your staff review these publications and clip all articles relating to your college and all articles relating to the issues on your list. Each day, take the time to read these news clips and, if you have time, listen to the news on the radio and watch the news on television. These activities will help you to become more attuned to newsworthy information.

As was mentioned, one of the easiest ways to gain media attention is to "hook" onto an existing story or news item. Therefore, it is essential that you monitor the media to determine potential story opportunities.

As was mentioned before, the difference between being an adequate media strategist and an exceptional one rests with your understanding of the media's needs and your ability to take full advantage of the various opportunities each medium offers. Once you have become familiar with the information outlined in the section, you will be on your way to becoming an exceptional media professional and to successfully promoting your institution through the Centennial.

The following section provides samples and checklists for the Centennial and various activities you will execute as the communications director of your program.

SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY

for information contact:

Name and Telephone Number
Date

XXXX Participates in National Centennial Celebration of Community Colleges

Next week community colleges around the country will participate in a symbolic flag-raising event to initiate a year-long Centennial celebration. This nation-wide celebration will include a host of activities on XXXX's campus and throughout the community.

The Centennial marks the founding of the nation's first continuously operating community college in Joliet, Illinois, a community college that continues to provide a first-class education to students in the Chicago area. Since then, more than 1,100 community colleges have opened their doors to students, providing them education and job skills to keep them competitive in emerging markets. More than 10 million students are currently enrolled in community colleges.

At XX Community College, President X and other college officials will raise a specially designed Centennial flag and will describe a year-long series of events they've designated to focus the public's attention on the Centennial and the contribution of community colleges to our educational heritage. Officials will be available after the flag raising for broadcast and print interviews. For information on how to schedule interviews, please contact XX by telephone at X or by e-mail at X.

###

SAMPLE CENTENNIAL PRESS RELEASE

for information contact:

Name and Telephone Number
Date

X Hails a Century of Community College Service

XX Community College President X, participating in a symbolic flag raising event to mark the beginning of a year-long Centennial celebration of the nation's community colleges, said the country is a better place, thanks to a rich history of progressive educational policies promoted by 1,132 community colleges. This nation-wide celebration will include a host of activities on campus and throughout the community.

"One hundred years after the Joliet Township school board authorized its high school to offer postgraduate courses, the concept of community-based education is alive and well and flourishing," X said. "Today, more than 10 million students are enrolled in these two-year institutions, nearly half of all undergraduate enrollment. The schools they attend are on the cutting edge and re-inventing themselves every day to meet the changing needs of the marketplace. Because of their unique approach to education, all Americans can expect access to quality education at an affordable price."

More than XX community colleges around the country raised flags in a coordinated gesture of celebration and solidarity. In April, students representing the Phi Theta Kappa honor society will participate in a torch relay event that will finish in Chicago, site of the American Association of Community Colleges' annual convention.

The Centennial marks 100 years of service to students and the communities where they live. Throughout the country, community colleges will be marking the Centennial with a year of celebrations, cultural events, and community forums. Many will have important announcements about enhancements in education offerings and new partnerships with businesses and the community.

X noted that at a time when many Americans are becoming increasingly concerned about the cost of a college education, that community colleges remain eminently affordable. "Where else can a student take accredited courses, polish up on skills they may have missed in high school or learn a marketable skill for about $1,500 a year in tuition," he said.

SAMPLE CENTENNIAL PRESS RELEASE (continued)

"Community colleges are the major provider of nurses to allied health industries, and a leading educator of informational technology specialists. They are the preferred institution for re-educating and training workers to keep our national workforce skilled and competitive. In fact, 95 percent of businesses and organizations surveyed that use community colleges recommend them."

Community colleges are a uniquely American innovation. For many decades they have opened their doors to all people interested in advancing themselves. Race, economic circumstances, or even past achievement have never been barriers to access.

Further, community colleges will give you the support you need to help you through your studies. The American Association of University Women has cited community colleges as potential models for providing childcare, mentoring, and tutoring services that support women.

Nearly 25 percent of those entering community colleges will apply the credits they accumulate toward degrees at a four-year institution. And for those who decide to go right into the job force after learning a skill in community colleges, the experience will have been very worthwhile. Men graduating with associate degrees earn an average of 18 percent more than men with high school degrees; women earn about 26 percent more.

This past century has been an exciting time for community colleges. The past century has been a "Century of Innovation." But the next century promises to be even more electrifying.

"Already the leaders in offering distance learning, community colleges — 95 percent of which are Internet connected — are expected to continue to make strides in this direction. We will continue to integrate the real world into our curriculum and focus on workforce development issues. And we will continue to acknowledge our commitment to the community, making civic responsibility a centerpiece of our curriculum."

###

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

hold for release:

Date

for information contact:

XXX
Name and phone number

XX Community College Announces New Job Training Partnership

XX (CITY)— A major job training partnership between XX Community College and XX, one of the nation's leading fabricators of electronic circuit boards, was announced yesterday by college and company officials at the groundbreaking ceremony of the company's new plant.

X, president and CEO of XX, said his company has been eyeing sites for relocation in the area for many months, but was unable to commit to the move until it could be assured of the availability of a well-trained workforce.

"The willingness of the college to commit its personnel and resources to the training effort was a critical ingredient in his company's decision to move to the region," X said. "We were heartened by the speed and intelligence that college officials brought to the task. It is one reason why our company in particular, and many others around the nation have come to appreciate the value of community colleges. They not only provide low-cost, high quality education to those who ordinarily might not be able to afford a college education, but they also provide opportunities for employees in fast-changing industries like ours to remain lifelong learners."

X, president of XX Community College, said he and other college officials brainstormed a solution to the company's problem when it was approached by an intermediary. "This is a partnership that serves the college, the community and XX very well," he said. "We have the resources, the educational expertise and the ability to ramp up quickly to meet the immediate needs of this very important industry. It's the kind of project that we hope will keep our region economically vibrant as industries retool for the technologies of the future."

The announcement coincides with the Centennial anniversary of the nation's community colleges. During a century of innovation and service, community colleges have earned a reputation for being responsive to the needs of businesses and to the educational and job training needs of community residents.

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE (continued)

In a recent National Workforce Development Study conducted by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), over half the participating employers said they choose community colleges to provide workforce education and training services because the schools offer customization, quality, and convenience. They also said they choose community colleges because they are cost-effective.

The demand for lifelong learners in the nation's labor force is clear. Almost 80 percent of the employers responding to the AACC's survey reported that from 26 to 100 percent of their current workforce requires training. Similarly, a 1998 poll by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce showed that 59 percent of respondents said it had been "very difficult" to find qualified workers that year.

Major industries have given community colleges their vote of confidence. Microsoft, for example, has contributed $7 million to community colleges over five years to develop model information technology programs. The first grants were awarded in 1998. Up to 25 community colleges will benefit from the partnership.

Ever since the first community college was founded in 1901 in Joliet, Illinois, community colleges have been tailoring their curriculum to meet the needs of their communities. They have done so cost-effectively and, with their open admissions policies, they have demonstrated a commitment to offering a quality education to anyone who continues to meet the requirements of the institution.

Throughout the year, XX Community College will be joining more than 1,100 community colleges around the country in a Centennial celebration of service and a commitment to open access to a high quality and affordable education.

###

PRESS CONFERENCE

objective:

To promote the Centennial celebration of community colleges and thereby increase public awareness of the value of community colleges and the successes of your institution.

materials:

media advisory
press release
fact sheet
press conference agenda

checklist:

- Develop media materials (i.e. press release, media advisory, fact sheets) that explain the background and purpose of the Centennial celebration and your institution for distribution to area newspapers, television and radio stations, and other news outlets.
- Mail or fax the media advisory to selected newspapers, news services, television and radio stations, and other available media outlets three to four days before the event.
- Conduct media outreach, at least two days before the event, to reporters at the targeted outlets to confirm that the information was received and to answer any questions they may have about the program or press conference.
- Select a location that is convenient for the media or one that provides strong opportunities for interesting visuals. Make sure that the room will accommodate the expected audience and that it can meet the needs of the broadcast media.
- Provide a podium that can hold several microphones and display the logo or name of the organization. Make sure the podium and sign are both made of non-glare material so that they do not reflect the light of the cameras.
- Provide chairs for reporters, leaving enough room in the back or middle for cameras and tripods. If several speakers will be offering remarks, provide a head table with chairs and name cards to identify each representative. Set up easels to display any visual materials.
- Provide a reception table at the entrance for the media to sign in (include name, news organization, and phone number) and pick up media information kits.
- Arrive at the event at least a half- to one-hour early to make sure your room arrangements are in order. Bring along a tape recorder to set on the podium to record the event.
- Start the press conference once you think the key members of the media have arrived and limit the event to 45 minutes or an hour. Allow ample time for questions and answers.

SAMPLE PITCH LETTER

DATE:

TO: The Editor

FROM: XXXX

RE: Community Colleges Centennial

This year, the nation's 1,132 community colleges will be celebrating their birth. Community colleges, a distinctly American innovation in higher education, serve 10.4 million students, about half of all U.S. undergraduates.

Over the last 100 years, community colleges have evolved and stayed relevant because they have kept pace with the dynamics of a changing global economy. In fact, some would argue that our workforce, and indeed our nation, would become irrelevant in the world markets without the educational and career training offered by community colleges.

Here in X, our community college has been embraced as a resource. Students who enter our doors, sometimes with limited skills, leave with marketable skills that give them the opportunity to become productive individuals. At the same time, they help our community's business climate by ensuring that industries can count on having an educated and skilled workforce. And as college tuitions continue to rise, community colleges offer a reasonably priced option to complete the first two-years toward a bachelor's degree

Many businesses turn to us to provide refresher courses for their workers who face obsolescence every time a new innovation hits the market. We also are a resource for those who need to develop proficiency in English, or for those mid-career people who simply want to try their hand at something new.

Enclosed is an op-ed piece that describes our important role over the last century and our outlook for the century that awaits us. I hope you find the space to devote to this important issue.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please fell free to contact me at XXX-XXX-XXXX.

SAMPLE OP-ED

Community Colleges: A Century of Service and Innovation
By (XXXX)

When you look around this region, one of the institutions that can claim credit for the tremendous growth that has occurred over the last decade is XXXX. Without the community college, many local industries would have been outpaced by changes in workforce preparation, our wage base would have decreased and the quality of our lives would have declined.

Of course community colleges play other roles. They help those with limited skills and resources acquire the knowledge they need to either enroll in college-level courses or move into the job market.

In a few days, community college administrators and friends around the country will be raising flags at their institutions in a symbolic display of unity and a celebration of our Centennial. The event marks the decision 100 years ago by a group of forward-looking school board officials in Joliet, Illinois, to offer postgraduate courses in the township's high school. Out of this experiment was born the nation's first continuously operating community college, which continues even now as a viable institution.

Today, more than 1,132 community colleges are serving 10.4 million students. They amount to about 45 percent of all U.S. undergraduate enrollments. The average age of the student is 29; 64 percent of them attend part-time and about one-third receive some form of financial aid. *(Insert your own enrollment figures here.)*

Community colleges are a uniquely American innovation in education. In most countries, the United States included, higher education is often reserved for the elite — those who have the academic credentials and those who can afford the price of entry. They must achieve a certain rank in their high school classes and they must perform well on high-stakes standardized tests.

The rationale of the community college is different. Its premise is the same as the premise that supports all great democratic institutions — that everyone should have the opportunity to go as far as their talents and means will take them. We know that millions of people encounter problems that prevent them from becoming good students. The hardships include poverty, discrimination, dysfunctional families, sickness, and a host of other problems. Often language is a barrier. The mission of the community college is to offer remediation to those who need it, and opportunity for those who want it. The doors of the community college are open to anyone who has a desire to succeed. Students who lack the prerequisites for college-level work will not be turned away. Instead, they will receive the instruction and support they need to move up to college-level work.

SAMPLE OP-ED (continued)

Make no mistake: If you don't work hard and dedicate yourself to the task of learning, you will not succeed in a community college any more than you will in a four-year institution. But the point is that students will not encounter any artificial barriers to entry. The mission of the community college is to provide access to all through low tuition (about $1,500 a year) and wide program offerings.

And for those who want to use the two years of community college education to prepare for transfer to a four-year institution, research suggests this is a wise strategy. According to a University of Illinois in Chicago study, community college students who transfer to four-year schools and complete their bachelor's degrees obtain roughly equal job stability, prestige, and earnings as students who began in four-year institutions. Another study at the University of California Santa Barbara shows that transfer students, because they have had an opportunity to bone up on their skills, will enter academic institutions with more prestige than those attended by similar students right out of high school.

In addition to serving students who have been under-served, community colleges are dedicated to the concept of lifelong learning. Keeping pace with innovations in our field is critical. Obsolescence is the enemy of all working people, whether they are in traditional blue-collar jobs or white-collar positions. In recent years, such fast-changing industries as information technology and the semiconductor design and fabrication have made ample use of our re-training programs, many of them specifically tailored to industry needs. (*Insert local stats and facts here.*)

Community college administrators know that there are many who undervalue the education we provide. They say our curricula are watered down and that our standards are not high enough. We think these arguments are not only shortsighted but also inaccurate. They ignore the critical role we play in keeping our citizens and those new to our country productive members of a changing society.

For 100 years community colleges have been vital to the fabric of our nation. As we continue our work, and new trends in distance learning develop, we believe we are positioned to remain key players, and that all Americans will benefit from our work. The Centennial is a celebration of our past successes and a harbinger of good things to come.

SAMPLE RADIO PSAS

:30 Seconds

Many Americans today are confronted with the choice of either saving to send their children to college, or saving for their own retirement. Getting a quality education doesn't have to be that way.

A growing number of students are deciding to spend their first two years of college at a community college and using their credits to transfer to a four-year school. Studies show that you can make this choice without sacrificing quality or job market competitiveness. In fact, research suggests that for some students going to a community college first will improve their prospects of getting into certain four-year schools later.

So choose wisely. Get all the facts - because the fact remains...you can get a quality and affordable education.

For details, contact your local community college at XXX or visit their Web site at www.XXX.edu

###

:60 Seconds

Think fast. What do sports legend Jackie Robinson, actress Annette Bening, fashion designer Calvin Klein, and astronaut Eileen Collins all have in common?

If you're thinking overachiever, you're right. But there is one more thing...they all attended community colleges!

Almost half of all undergraduates in this country go to community colleges. For over 100 years, community colleges have helped launch students into four-year universities and stellar careers.

Today, they play a bigger role than ever in educating people for higher-paying, more rewarding jobs. Community colleges can help you upgrade your current skills, develop new ones, or explore something you've always wanted to learn more about.

So what are you waiting for? Community colleges offer a world of opportunity. Contact your local community college and get started on your own road to success.

For details, contact your local community college at XXX or visit their Web site at www.XXX.edu

###

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

REPLY CARD

REPLY CARD

Community College PSA

Have you chosen to air our PSA? ____yes ____no

If yes, when will the PSA run?

How often will the PSA run?

Thank you.

Be sure to self address the other side of the reply card, and include postage if your budget permits.

COMMUNICATING THE CENTENNIAL & LOCAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S MESSAGE

How to Identify the Best Speaking Opportunities

Everyone's time is valuable. As much as we would like to speak at every event that presents itself, it would simply be impossible to do so. For that reason, it is important to establish some ground rules for any speaking engagements. This way, you ensure that these events are of value to your institution and its issues.

Such ground rules include:

- Identifying specific groups you would like to address (trade groups, chambers of commerce, local industries, high schools, etc.);
- Identifying types of events where you'd like to have a speaker (conferences, organizational meetings, luncheons, roundtable discussions, etc.);
- Identifying how far your institution is willing to send a speaker for an engagement (local, in-state, regional, national); and
- Identifying your financial requirements of an invitation (travel costs, honorarium, etc.).

Once you have developed these ground rules, you can then begin researching those opportunities that meet your college's needs. By knowing those organizations and gatherings that host speakers, you can begin positioning speakers for invitations in the future.

Securing Prime Speaking Opportunities

Securing prime speaking opportunities can be a challenge. In today's age, the number of pundits and experts in a given field continues to grow and grow. Everyone wants to be a premier authority on an issue, and sees public events as the prime way to bolster that image.

To help position individuals for speaking opportunities, there are several things you can do, including:

- **Assemble Background Information** – Provide a biography of the speaker, background on your issue, and media clippings available for any interested parties;
- **Find Speakers Known to the Media** – Often, those selecting speakers look to those who have been active in the media. Their appearances in local newspapers or on the radio or television will increase their name recognition;
- **Establish a Reputation with Local Groups** – If you have identified those groups you would like to have a speaker address, get to know those in the organization and make yourself, your expertise and the expertise of your speaker known to them; and
- **Solicit Invitations** – There is no harm in reaching out to organizations. Just as you would call a newspaper editorial board asking to talk about an issue,

you can make your speakers available to any and all organizations that you have identified as important to your issue.

know the audience

Great presentations require more work than simply knowing your material. A great chemist may be able to provide an excellent presentation at a faculty meeting, but is a poor public speaker if she cannot express those same points to a lay audience of high school graduates. Truly great presentations require a keen understanding and appreciation for the audience that is receiving the remarks.

Newspaper reporters, even those writing for respected publications such as *The New York Times*, are constantly reminded that their work should be written for the average seventh-grade education. That way, they are assured that their stories are read and understood by virtually anyone who picks up the newspaper.

The same is true for public speaking. A speech or presentation cannot be understood by an audience if the speaker focuses on trade lingo and assumes a strong base of knowledge on the issue. For that reason, speakers need to make sure they thoroughly understand the groups they are speaking to. To that end, you should always ask some key questions about the audience that your speaker will be addressing:

- What is the primary occupation of the audience?
- What is the primary age of the audience?
- What is the average education of the audience?
- Is the event open to the public?
- Will the media be present at the event?
- How was the event organized?
- Will there be a question-and-answer session?
- What other speakers have spoken to the group?
- What are you hoping to get out of this event?

By asking these few simple questions, you can gain an understanding of the types of people you will be speaking to, what they will be expecting, and what sort of results will come from this speaking engagement.

general public speaking tips

In any public speaking situation, whether it be at a conference or with a newspaper editorial board, it is important to follow some basic guidelines in shaping remarks. While everything needs to be said in the voice of the speaker, and not in some predetermined organizational voice, there are some basic tips that can help speakers focus their remarks, including:

Make It Salient — Make sure that the points of the address grab the attention of the target audience and hold their long-term interest;

Use Colorful Language — Everyone remembers a clever turn of phrase, vivid image, and a passionate plea;

Re-coin Clichés — Our language is full of clichés that resonate with the public. Altering a cliché to fit the message will draw attention;

Use Tag Lines — Often used in advertising, tag lines identify an item or an idea in a short and memorable moment;

Offer Useful Analogies — Often, an audience will not understand a speech unless the speaker relates the concept to something the audience may know much better;

Offer Common Sense — Restate the obvious in a new way people can easily comprehend;

Shatter Myths — Just as records are made to be broken, myths are meant to be shattered. Speakers should not hesitate to clear the air or set the record straight;

Stress the Bottom Line — People care about results and their costs, not about process, possibilities, and plans; and

Offer the Big Picture — While it is important to stress the key points and offer valuable examples and detail, it is also important not to forget the big picture. The "vision thing" is crucial in framing the argument.

use visual aids

During the presidential elections of 1992, Ross Perot reinvented the use of the visual aid during public speaking engagements by continually relying on charts and graphs to display his message and prove his points. Since then, virtually everyone uses some form of visual aid to simplify an issue or debate.

These aids can take a number of forms, the most common being:

- Bar or pie graphs;
- Outlines of key points;
- Powerpoint presentations;
- Flow charts;
- Reprints of newspaper articles; and,
- Video soundbites/video segments.

While visual aids can be useful in focusing a presentation, it is important to consider some key points when determining what aids to use with your presentation:

Keep It Simple — The aid should complement remarks, not leave the audience guessing as to how it fits into them;

More Is Not Better — Often, one or two carefully thought-out aids can better explain views than a dizzying collection of dozens of different pieces;

Get Permission — If your speakers are going to hand out a copy of a newspaper article or rebroadcast a television segment, be sure they get permission from the paper or station;

Know the Room — If your speakers are presenting in a large auditorium, a chart on a easel is not the best form of illustration. Likewise, using large Powerpoint presentations in a small classroom may be difficult to focus;

Color versus Black-and-White — If your speakers are reprinting graphs and charts, remember to consider the copying needs and possible last-minute changes. Not every city has a 24-hour copy place to make edits to color copies; and

Aids as Guides — Any visual used should help guide the presentation. They allow people to see where your speaker is heading and remind individuals of the key points. Nobody is expected to put an entire presentation on a handout.

evaluating response: how successful was the presentation?

It's often difficult to tell just how well a presentation went. Your speaker may have a sense, but sometimes they're the worst judges. So the question remains, how can you measure the success of a given presentation or speech? Unfortunately, this can be the most difficult challenge facing your public speaking agenda.

There are a few tactics available to evaluate the presentation, however, including:

Reaction of Colleague — Send a colleague to the event so that you will have a set of eyes to gauge the reaction of the audience and have an educated ear that understands the subject matter and the effectiveness of the presentation;

Videotape — Many of today's larger conferences and events videotape presentations. Prior to your speaker's presentation, you can request a video camera and ask for a copy of the presentation at the end of the session;

Questionnaire — If part of a formal conference or event, you can ask for a brief questionnaire to be included in the attendee information. The questionnaire would solicit feedback on the presentation; and

Media Coverage — Newspaper or broadcast coverage of the engagement should give you a good sense for what others view as the highlights of the presentation. These reports will also voice any criticism or problems with the presentation.

suggestions on how to "follow up" after presentations

Often, reaction to a given speech or presentation is late coming. Some in the audience will wait until the end of the event to gauge its success. Others may wait until they have read the media coverage or checked out some of the information your speaker presented before they react.

Just because your speaker has finished a particular engagement does not mean the presentation is finished. There is still a great deal that can be done to solidify your position in the local community.

Media Follow Up — Subsequent conversations with the reporter, submission of an op-ed or a letter to the editor, or suggestions of follow-up articles can aid in the promotion of your key points.

Outreach to Attendees — After securing a list of attendees from the event sponsor, forward additional information on the issue to those who have expressed an interest in the topic. This is also a good way to build additional third-party support in the community.

Thank You Notes — Following any presentation or event, send a thank you note to the presentation organizer and event hosts. This gesture is often

overlooked in today's society, and thus can help establish goodwill with third-party organizations.

training your spokespersons

Few individuals are born with the qualities that make them captivating public speakers and engaging interview subjects. If you want to retain your spokespersons and have them perform consistently well, you should offer them training and pointers before throwing them before the media.

In a few short pages, this guide cannot present enough information to turn your spokespersons into effective public speakers and interview subjects. We recommend that you consider sending them to training courses offered by reputable organizations.

We recommend that you host a half-day media training session for your spokespersons (including college president, other administrators or top faculty — no more than five). This training will help your spokespersons to take pride in their role, understand the media, feel more comfortable with the media, and comprehend the messages to deliver.

It may be expedient to bring in a trainer consultant. If you decide to do so, you should, in advance:

- decide key objectives desired from training;
- contact other communications specialists with exemplary programs for recommendations or referrals of trainers; and
- develop a checklist to assess the firms.

Develop Tools. It will be helpful to arm each of your spokespersons with tools to use when they communicate with the media and the public. As a part of the media training of your spokespersons, we recommend you prepare the following materials. These tools might include:

- key messages and talking points;
- 10 basic tips on interviewing;
- sample questions and answers; and
- a one-page fact sheet on the college.

Rules For Spokesperson

Three basic rules must be followed by all those wishing to get their message out through the press.

1. Tell the truth.
2. Provide the public with an inside view of your cause and organization.
3. Serve and protect your issue and organization.

A balanced combination of these basic, yet integral, guidelines, plus the good common sense recommended in these pages, will make your dealings with reporters much more enjoyable.

A spokesperson must cultivate a friendly, yet professional, relationship with reporters. This relationship should be based on trust. He or she should be straightforward with reporters, since most don't enjoy spin. Trust is slowly earned and quickly lost if evidence of dishonesty is found. Keep humor and sound judgment in the mix. Humor, when used appropriately, can rescue a spokesperson during a tense moment. Often a good one-liner that gets a laugh can defuse more abrasive and damaging questions.

With today's technology, news can be communicated to millions of people within minutes. However, some media will be at a disadvantage since television can go live with breaking news but daily newspapers must wait until the morning. Be considerate of deadlines when announcing big news. [Refer to the media guide in Chapter 3.]

special tips for conducting successful media interviews

You or the person designated as the spokesperson for your institution will also have opportunities to discuss the goals of the Centennial and your college with the media. The protocol and rules for addressing the media are very different from those they will encounter in speaking to a roomful of interested observers.

First, you need to understand what you can tell a reporter and what you can't. Over the years, journalists and their sources have developed a code of conduct to protect people who want to provide information but are concerned for one reason or another about being identified, by name or otherwise. Some use the phrase "off-the-record" to indicate that what you tell them may appear in the story, but without attribution; others use the phrase "speaking on background."

The best and simplest rule is never to tell a reporter anything that you don't want to read in print, see on television, or hear on the radio. If you have nothing to hide and particularly when discussing a positive news story, be very open with the reporter. However, from time to time, there will be cases when you will want to tell a reporter something that you don't want attributed to you.

Tell reporters at the outset what your pre-conditions and ground rules are for the interview. Reporters will assume that everything you say to them will be on the record and for quotation — unless you tell them differently.

tips for interviews by the media

To prepare for interviews, you should:

- Anticipate questions that may be asked, and draft responses, and
- Review relevant facts, statistics, and special examples needed to support your message.

During interviews, you should:

- Never tell a reporter something you don't want to appear in print;
- Go "off the record" when you want the reporter to have the information without the ability to quote you by name;
- Get your main points upfront. You may be edited;
- Make your points clearly and concisely. This is particularly important during live television interviews;
- Try to keep your answers to three or four sentences;
- Stop talking when you feel you have adequately answered a question and do not be "baited" by reporter silences;
- Avoid becoming angry with a reporter;
- Admit when you don't know the answer, then offer to find the information; and
- Learn to "bridge" to *your* messages.

tips for television and other public appearances

The key to successful TV or for public appearances is to get others to pay attention to you and what you have to say — not to what you are wearing and how you look.

Here are some basic guidelines:

Preparation — In advance, think of questions that might be asked, and plan your responses. Define your viewpoint, and be sure of the facts.

Appearance (General) — Wear clothes in which you feel comfortable, but avoid patterns or designs that might prove visually distracting. Wear the color that looks best on you. Also, most people check their appearance standing in front of a mirror, but many interviews and discussions are conducted seated. How does that outfit look when you are in a chair?

Appearance (Men) — A black suit may look nice in the office or at funerals, but the viewer at home will see the image of a wealthy corporate executive. There is nothing wrong with gray, tan, blue, or any lighter color. A solid-color sport jacket is fine. A blue shirt is no longer mandatory, but if it compliments the outfit, fine.

Appearance (Women) — Tailored suits in solid colors or simple patterns are best. Brighter colors are fine for suits and shirts. Avoid black or white. Avoid too much pattern or too much fabric. Ties or ruffles are acceptable, but keep them small and simple. No flashy or noisy jewelry.

Makeup — Only the big stations or networks employ makeup artists, so practice under the supervision of someone who knows what he or she is doing. Moderation is the key. Even men find some makeup helpful for TV events. A light touch of medium "pancake" or powder can cover up a shiny nose or forehead, cover a heavy beard, and eliminate shadows under the eyes.

Glasses — No problem, unless they are large or contain thick lenses that reflect the light. If you are comfortable without the glasses, take the off — but not if you have the look of someone who wears glasses and has just taken them off.

Attitude — Project enthusiasm and energy; apathy produces an apathetic audience and a dull event. Television is a pictorial medium. Success can be as much a matter of impression as substance.

SAMPLE LETTER REQUESTING A SPEAKING OPPORTUNITY

Date

Dear XXX:

I am writing to make you aware of an exciting new partnership between XX Community College and some of the area's cutting edge businesses. The partnership is the latest in a series of steps we have taken over the last decade to ensure that our region remains economically viable. These efforts are vital. Unless we can provide the business community with the skills it needs to compete in the global marketplace, we will fail to attract the career opportunities so critical to sustaining our growth as a community.

At the same time, I would like to make you aware of the Centennial celebration of the founding of the nation's first community college. For those of us in the higher education community, this is a landmark event. We expect to mark this year with a series of speeches, discussions, observances and such partnerships as the one I will be unveiling to your members. In so doing, we also hope that we can make the general public aware of the enormous contributions community colleges have made to the region.

In that spirit, I would very much like an opportunity to address the members of your organization. We have a compelling story to tell — one that I think your members will enjoy hearing. It is a story that traces the academic accomplishments of our students, our role in the community, the successful efforts we have made to keep local industries competitive, and our exciting plans for the future.

I welcome your thoughts and eagerly await your response.

Regards,

SAMPLE CENTENNIAL SPEECH

Good afternoon (morning, evening) ladies and gentlemen. I'd like to start off with a little quiz. What do you think Jeanne Kirkpatrick, H. Ross Perot, Walt Disney, Clint Eastwood, Jim Lehrer, author Rita Mae Brown, Calvin Klein and winning Super Bowl coach Dick Vermeil all have in common? If you said they all went to a community college, you get a prize.

Because sure enough, you can bet your prize that these and many others who are now household names went to community colleges. Some went because they weren't sure what they wanted to do with their lives and believed that a community college would help them decide. Others went because of limited economic means. And still others went because they needed a couple of years to brush up on their educational skills.

In every case, it can be said that community colleges helped these outstanding individuals reach their potential. The fact of the matter is that among our alumni are Pulitzer and Nobel prize winners, astronauts, actors, writers, members of Congress and many others.

I am here today, in the Centennial year of community colleges, to talk about our proud record of accomplishment. Our story began 100 years ago when a few prescient individuals from the Joliet, Ill., township school board voted to offer post-secondary courses through their high school. Those courses were so successful — Northwestern University and the University of Chicago accepted them for credits from transfer students — that in 1916 a separate institution was formed called Joliet Junior College. It was the first in a movement that now claims 1,132 members. These 1,132 community colleges educate about 10.4 million students — about half of all U.S. undergraduates. Their average age is 29. Some of them will go directly into the work force, others will transfer into four-year colleges.

Nevertheless, I'm sorry to say that community colleges are a much undervalued institution in this country. You will not find a more democratic enterprise in higher education anywhere — either in this country or, for that matter, anywhere else in the world. Like Lady Liberty herself, community colleges take the tired and the poor, the masses yearning to breathe free. Indeed, among our student body are recent immigrants just learning their way around the language and culture of our great nation. We also know that millions of people encounter problems that prevent them from becoming good students. Their hardships include poverty, discrimination, and a host of other problems. The mission of the community college is to offer remediation to those who need it, and opportunity to those want it. The doors of the community college are open to anyone who has a desire to succeed.

We take them as they are and give them the opportunity to learn English and to polish up their computation and presentation skills. For those who want to learn a job skill such as nursing or computer science, we do that. Or if they want to earn the credits to go on to a four-year college, we do that, too.

SAMPLE CENTENNIAL SPEECH (continued)

Students who lack the prerequisites for college-level work will not be turned away. Instead, they will receive the coaching and support they need to move up to collegel level study.

Make no mistake: If you don't work hard and dedicate yourself to the task of learning, you will not succeed in a community college any more than you will in a four-year institution. But the point is that students will not encounter any artificial barriers to entry. The mission of the community college is to provide access to all.

What's more, our colleges offer excellent value. The average annual cost of attending a community college is about $1,500 a year. That's about one-tenth the average tuition and fees paid at independent four-year colleges. Listen to this:

Community colleges have the lowest cost per full-time-equivalent student of any type of higher education institution. Community colleges spend more than 75 percent of their budgets directly on student-related expenditures, a higher proportion than any other sector. Community colleges spend more than 50 percent of their budgets on instruction and academic support. Full-time community college faculty spend more hours in the classroom than faculty in any other sector of higher education.

What's the point of all these numbers? Value. Community colleges give you more for your money than any other higher education institution. Now I know some of you are thinking you get what you pay for. Well, listen to this.

According to a University of Illinois in Chicago study, community college students who transfer to four-year schools and complete their bachelor's degrees obtain roughly equal job stability, prestige and earnings as students who began in four-year institutions. Another study at the University of California Santa Barbara shows that transfer students, because they have had an opportunity to bone up on their skills, will enter academic institutions with more prestige than those attended by similar students right out of high school.

A federally funded research project, called the National Study of Student Learning, traced the cognitive growth of a sample of students at 23 colleges around the country. The results of this study are an eye-opener. Students tested at the end of their first year of post-secondary education — whether in community colleges of four-year colleges — showed virtually indistinguishable gains in reading comprehension, math and critical thinking. Further, at the end of their second year, there was virtual parity in gains on writing skills and science reasoning.

This important study says that students develop at about the same rate, whether they go to community colleges or four-year institutions.

SAMPLE CENTENNIAL SPEECH (continued)

Pair the results of the NSSL study with the University of Illinois study, and you reach this inescapable conclusion: attending a community college is a cost-effective way to acquire the first two years of a college education without sacrificing quality or job market competitiveness.

As many of you know, community colleges have other missions. In addition to offering remedial education and courses that can be applied for credit to four-year institutions, community colleges have a significant job-training component. The need for such services is evident. Almost 80 percent of employers report that from 26 to 100 percent of their current workforce requires training, according to a recent study conducted by the American Association of Community Colleges. The study, if you want to look at it, is called the National Workforce Development Study.

Similarly, 59 percent of respondents to a 1998 U.S. Chamber of Commerce poll said it had been "very difficult" to find qualified workers that year. About half said they were dissatisfied with the quality of job applicants and more than one-third said jobs generally remained vacant at least three months.

The fact of the matter is that the need for skilled laborers is so great that it is crippling corporate growth. A 1998 survey of small businesses conducted by Coopers & Lybrand found that more than two-thirds of the firms that responded said a lack of skilled workers would limit their revenue growth. That's up from 50 percent in 1996 and 27 percent in 1993.

Keeping pace with innovations in our field is critical. Obsolescence is the enemy of all working people, whether they are in traditional blue-collar jobs or white-collar positions. In recent years, such fast-changing industries as information technology and semiconductor design and fabrication have made ample use of our re-training programs, many of them specifically tailored to their needs.

Community colleges are uniquely suited to this task. The Workforce Development Study I just mentioned said 96 percent of respondents rated our training programs as good or excellent. The study showed that employers choose community colleges to provide workforce education and training because they are cost-effective. Over half said customization, quality, and convenience were influential in their choice.

That's why companies like Texas Instruments, Motorola, Samsung, National Semiconductor, Intel, and AMD are giving us their vote of confidence. All of them participate in training programs at 80 community colleges for the training of semiconductor fabrication technicians. The program was developed by the Semiconductor Industry Association.

SAMPLE CENTENNIAL SPEECH (continued)

Microsoft has found a great resource in community colleges, too. It has contributed more than $7 million to fund information technology education at 25 community colleges. The first grant in this five-year program was awarded in 1998.

As states and regions strive to compete in the coming years, many will give even more attention to community colleges. Look at what's happening in Guilford County, North Carolina, a region struggling to recover from cutbacks in the textile, furniture and tobacco industries. County officials aggressively courted Konica Corp. of Japan. Working with the county, administrators and faculty from Guilford Technical Community College went overseas to determine what skills the film-making company would need to generate if it moved a plant to North Carolina. Such programs, supported by state training funds, have helped quintuple the per capita income in Guilford County over the last 20 years.

In Iowa, community colleges are using innovative financing techniques to make training available. Fifteen community colleges have issued more than $326.9 million in tax-exempt and taxable bonds for job training programs. The bonds have helped support the creation of 99,000 jobs through nearly 1,300 contracts with business and industry. The bonds were repaid with the tax revenue generated from the wages paid to the new employees and the new property taxes resulting from the expanding business project for up to 10 years.

In sum, I think the future is bright for community colleges, as bright as we want to make it. As we celebrate our Centennial this year, I hope you all will reflect on our successes, acknowledge our challenges and support us as we forge ahead in this new millennium. Thank you.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE